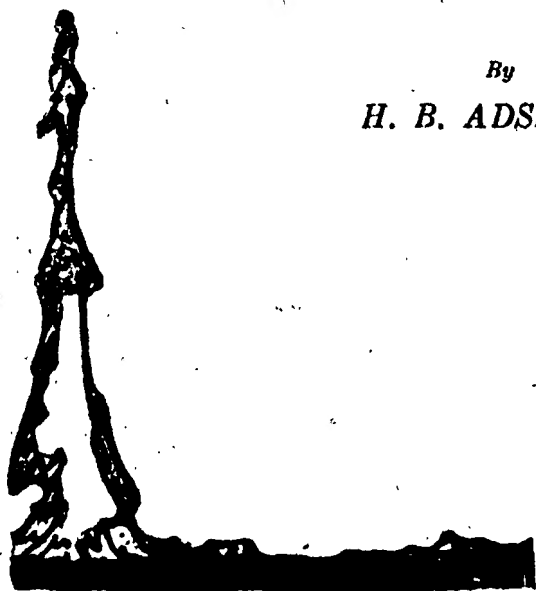
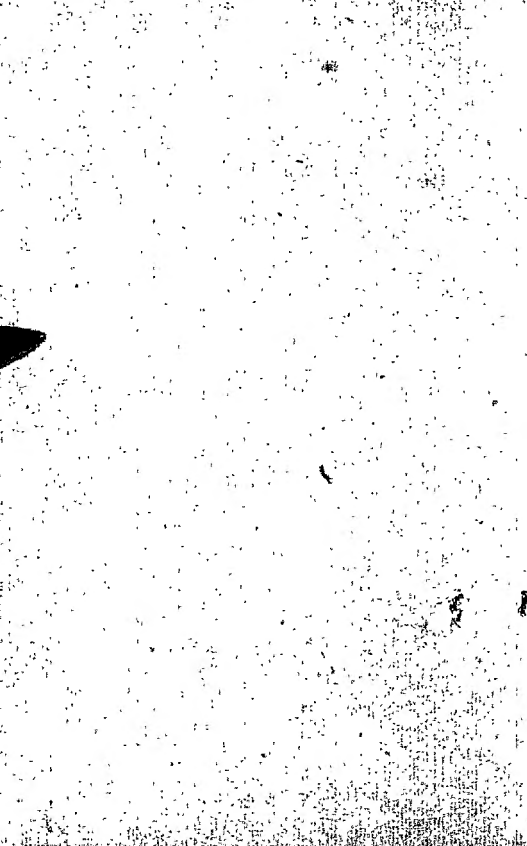


**Pioneer Tales**  
*and*  
**Other Human Stories**

*By*  
**H. B. ADSHEAD.**





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# Pioneer Tales

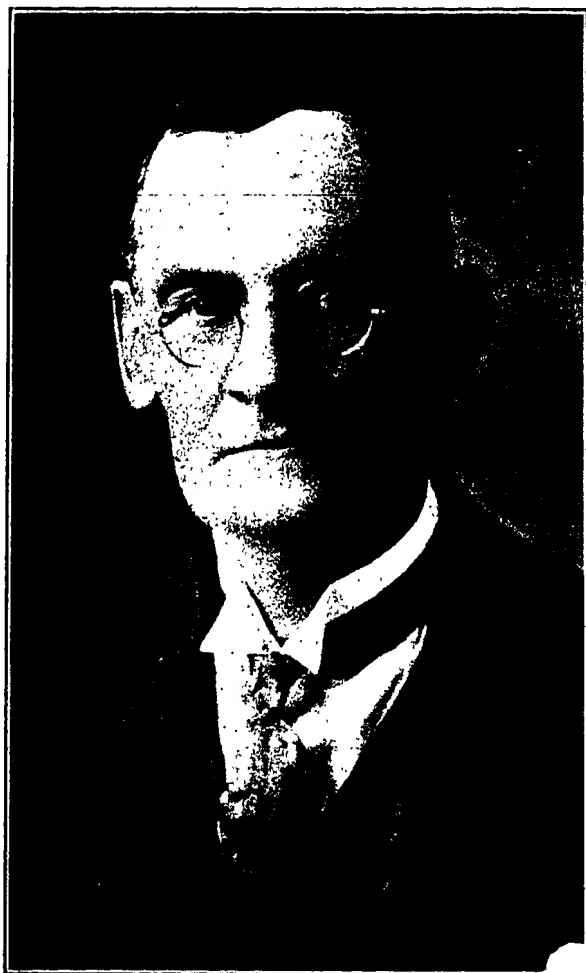
and

## Other Human Stories

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By  
H. B. ADSHEAD





H. B. ADSHEAD

## Foreword



*TO all those friends and old pioneérs  
in Alberta whose kindly deeds  
and sympathetic words made the  
rough places smooth in our home-  
steading days, these few human  
stories are sincerely dedicated.*

*H. B. ADSHEAD*

*Calgary, Alberta,  
April, 1924, and January, 1929.*

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## Our First Night in Alberta

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**I**N the spring of 1898, Klondyke year, I had come to Alberta to teach a summer school for \$40 per month, and incidentally to spy out this land of promise. I had kept a careful diary of weather conditions and had decided to cut all bridges behind me and bring our family out.

And so one Saturday in November I rode out to Olds with Mr. Bame (a farmer and trustee with whom I boarded), wondering how I was to finance going to Ontario and getting the family out.

Arriving in Olds there was a cattle train of seventeen cars of prime Alberta steers being loaded. I met the shipper of the cattle and I learned he was in need of a man to go with the cattle to Montreal. Upon learning I should get a pass back to Olds I applied for the job and asked if I should have time to go back to my boarding house and get some things. "When I want a man, I want him," said the shipper, "and the train leaves in ten minutes on rush orders to catch the boat for England."

"I'm your man," I said, and hurrying over to Mr. Bame I asked him to close my trunk and told him we would all be back as early as possible. And so I found myself in the caboose of a cattle train rushing to Montreal.

Arriving at home I closed up our affairs and on the second day of January, 1899, we heard the trainman call out: "The next station is Olds," and we knew we had arrived at our destination, where we were to carve out our future.

Upon alighting from the train with myself, wife, a girl and three boys, we were met by dear old Mr. Bame (now passed away), a veritable personification of Santa Claus, a short, stout man—

"with a round little belly,  
that shook when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly,"

blue dancing eyes, bushy brown whiskers and a smile that fairly beamed with welcome.

We were all bundled into a homemade short runner sleigh and away we sped westward. The shades of night were closing in when we neared the farm and my wife nudged me and whispered, "Where is the house? I don't see any house."

I pointed out the low sod shack, all covered with snow, but it could hardly be discerned, so low and white was it.

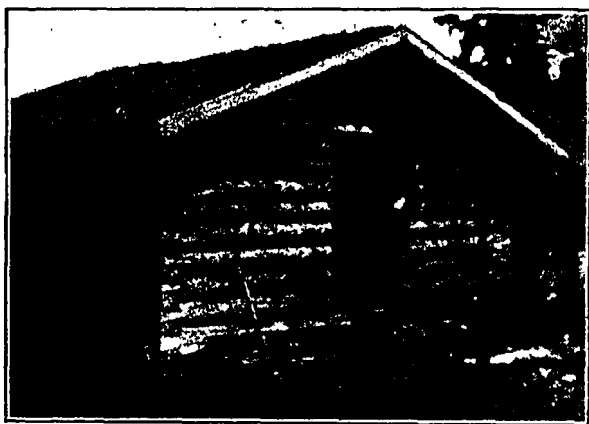
"Do you see that pole straight up in the air?" I asked. "Yes," she said. "Well, that's the pole where Polly, the tame bear, that I played with last summer, was tied," I said.

"Now look just beyond a little; do you see any building?" "Yes." "Well, that's the house."

"But it's not any bigger than our old pig pen in Ontario. It has no roof and is so low," she said.

But the sleigh soon drove past Polly's pole, and we were at the low door of the shack. Alighting from the sleigh we all went in while the horses were taken to the stable.

Inside the shack the stove was red hot with dry poplar wood, and although it was warm and cozy, it was not warmer



*"The hay peeped through at us between the roof poles."*

than the welcome, the right royal welcome, we received that winter night.

Looking up at the roof we could see the spruce poles with the hay sticking through, and I could sense my wife thinking: "Is this the region, this the soil, the clime?" but Mr. Bame, seeing them looking up, said, "We couldn't afford cedar shingles, so we had to put on prairie shingles (sods), poles and hay with two rows of sods on top. It keeps the house warm and it takes a good deal of rain before it comes through."

Nearly all the shacks of the early settlers were built of spruce logs with poles, hay and sods for the roof.



After we were all thawed out and the lamp lit, it was not long before Mrs. Bame had a steaming hot supper ready. Hot roast meat, brown gravy, mealy potatoes, cottage cheese, Saskatoon pie, and blueberry tarts. My, what a supper we hungry travellers ate. Had to have a second helping, all of us, to the tasty roast meat and gravy, and right pleased was the housewife to see us eat so heartily. We all praised the "layout."

"How did you like the meat?" said Mr. Bame, with a merry twinkle in his eye. "Splendid" we all chorused.

"Well," he said, "that was a chunk of young Polly the bear," "Polly the bear," we all cried out. Bear meat. The boys and I laughed, but the ladies looked somewhat disconcerted, and didn't know quite what to do, whether to part with Polly or not, but after a while we all agreed it was good.

The long journey, the cold drive, the hearty Alberta supper of bear meat, Saskatoons and blueberries made us sleepy early, and very soon we retired to our rooms, beds partitioned by curtains, and although the hay peeped through at us, between the roof poles, and the nor' wester howled at us outside, we felt, on this our first night in Alberta, that

"Kind hearts were more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood."



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## The Sleighs

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A FEW days after our experience with bear steak we moved into the quarters where we were to stay until we had our house built on the brush homestead we had taken.

Mr. Bame had a half-section about three miles further north, which was mostly hay land, with a slow-running creek (Sleepy Creek) running through it from north to south. On this piece of land was a sod-roofed stable and a sod-roofed shack, the floor of which was rather concave, as some of the sleepers had rotted and let the floor down in the middle (next August this concavity was not an unmixed evil). This shack and stable, with a piece of land, we were to have, and in return we fed a small bunch of cattle on the hay cut on the land.

We had only about \$300 when we landed and had bought a team of horses and two cows, so had to be careful. The school I was to teach did not open until next April and it was a long time to pay day.

As I had to build a house on our homestead this year and had little or no money, it was quite apparent I should have to use the three winter months in getting out timber and logs for a log house, and possibly a sod-roofed shack. Money for a frame house was entirely out of the question. But I had no sleighs and couldn't afford to buy any. No settler at that time, except perhaps some "bloated capitalist," some wealthy magnate, possessed a pair of "boughten sleighs." However, I had horses and some old harness I had brought from Ontario.

Across Sleepy Creek, which was now frozen over solidly and covered with snow, and about 400 yards distant, lived in another sod shack a Glasgow Scotchman, one of the early pioneers, but, like many others, alas, now laid away, dear old friend John Deans. He knew we had a bit of an organ and as he played the fiddle (by ear) he came across one evening and after an hour or so of reels and strathspeys and Highland schottisches, when we were puffing at our pipes, I told him of my difficulties. "Weel," he said, "ye'll hae to do like the rest of us did, ye'll hae to mak' a pair o' sleighs. I'll help ye to mak' 'em," said John. "You hitch your team on to my sleighs, put enough hay and oats in your 'gunny sack' and have your axe sharpened and put a lunch in your pocket and come across tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock, and we'll go to the bush and get the timber for your sleighs." So next morning, after the

chores were done, we got the lunch put up, sheepskin coat and fur cap and double mittens (for it was cold) and horse blankets for the horses, we hitched on to John's sleighs, the blankets on the front bob to sit on, with chains across the stakes and the gunny sack of horse feed tied on to the hind bob, and away we sped to the timber.

The sky was clear, the sun very bright, the air keen and crisp, with little frost flakes glinting and shimmering in the sunlight as the team, a little cold, broke into a gallop, then slowed into a quick trot. Occasionally we had to slap our hands and arms together to keep warm, not forgetting to watch each other's nose. Short icicles were hanging from the horses' noses and some from our moustaches. John, remarking on it, said: "Do you know what Mr. X told me? He said it was so dog-gone cold one morning when he was going to the bush and his horses had such long icicles on their noses that when he stopped a while at a neighbor's to get warm, their frozen breath had reached to the ground and frozen fast there, and he had to break the icicles before he could start again!"

I couldn't let that pass without some attempt to match it, so I said: "That was surely pretty cold, John, but a fellow who had a homestead in northern Saskatchewan told me that one night it was so cold that all the nails and door handles were white inside the shack and when he went to bed he kept his fur cap on to keep his ears from freezing, and when he went to blow the candle out he couldn't do it, the flame was frozen so hard he had to break it off."

"I think we'll walk after that," said John, and as the horses had slowed down to a walk we tied the lines around the stake of the hind bob and got off to walk to keep warm for fear the fate of the candle flame might overtake us.

It was a noteworthy fact that at any of the social gatherings, meetings, dances or picnics, a few of the "old-timers" used to gather in some corner and swap yarns, and the man that could tell the best carried off the honors of that day, and friend John had his share of honors. I was only a tenderfoot in those days.

By-and-by we entered the valley of the Little Red Deer river and very soon came to the banks where the trail crossed the river. We crossed and John piloted us to a piece of spruce timber. "What section is this?" I asked. After a pause, John said rather slowly, looking at me in a peculiar way: "All settlers that don't have permits get their timber from section 37." It was a little time before this enigma became clear.

As it was not far from noon we unhitched the horses, put their blankets on, fed them the contents of the "gunny-sack,"

and then proceeded to make a fire to boil some snow water for tea and thaw out our lunch.

While at dinner standing by the fire, a number of small grey birds flew down and picked up every crumb they could find. John said they were called whiskey-jacks; why, I don't know. It wasn't prohibition time. They even got so bold that when I sat on a log and put some crumbs on my hand and stretched my hand out at arm's length on the log and kept very still, they picked the crumbs out of my hand.

After dinner we lit our pipes and getting our axes off the sleighs, John proceeded to search the woods for timber for sleigh runners. Pretty soon I heard him call out, "here's one," and going over to him he showed me a spruce tree about eight inches through, which did not come out of the ground straight up, but curved a little, and then shot up straight.

"That'll make one pair of runners," he said. "Cut it down right close to the ground so as to get all the crook," he told me, "and then cut off about twelve feet." While I was doing this he found another similar tree for the second pair of runners. A small straight spruce about five inches did for the tongue, and in this way we secured enough suitable timber for our home-made sleighs.

After loading, we again hitched up the horses and started homeward, and we got out of the river flat as the sun was about to go down. It felt a good deal colder out of the woods than it did in, so we walked behind the sleighs a good share of the way home to keep warm, the time being beguiled with stories from John, how he travelled from Winnipeg (Fort Garry) to Calgary, before there was any railway, and the speculations as to where the new station and town were going to be, east or west of the Elbow.

As we got nearer home the stars were peeping out, the coyotes were howling on the hillsides near by, the sleighs were squeaking on the cold snow and the lamplight in the window of our sod shack could now be faintly seen in the distance shedding a cheery ray across the snow. I have more than once been thankful we had no blinds on our shack window—lighthouses on the cold snow-covered ocean prairie.

We arrived home tired and cold, but content and happy. The boys came out and put the team away, covered with frost, and oh, how welcome were the smiling home faces as the broom brushed the snow from our overshoes and they helped us off with our coats. How snug and palace-like seemed the sod shack as we stood by the roaring stove melting the icicles from our moustaches, even if the hay did peep at us from between the roof poles, and the bark did hang down from the rough spruce

ridge-poles. And talk about appetites! Hot potatoes, hot roast beef (not bear meat this time), hot gravy, hot everything, 'disappeared like snow in the summer sun. And after supper, as we sat near the stove smoking our pipes and the "women folks" cleared the dishes, the three boys crowded around us till all our five heads were close together, and they wanted to know all about the trail, and the whiskey-jacks, and the coyotes, and would they eat people up and did we see anything else besides in the woods, and how did we make tea, and when were we going to make the sleighs and could they help, and when could they go to the bush? And mother and daughter sat listening and knitting socks. Before going, John had to give us a few more Scotch reels and strathspeys on his fiddle with organ chording. Such a family, such happiness, such an Alberta! One hundred and sixty acres for each boy (nothing for the girls).

But, ah me! that was thirty years ago. Where now are the three little black heads that crowded around us so eager to learn, to explore and to possess this new land? 'Only one left. "Where are the other two?" did you say? Under two white crosses, that's all.



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## How They Were Made

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**A**BOUT ten o'clock next morning friend John could be seen making tracks for our shack. At every step he took could be seen "the powdery snow that rises up like smoke." The wind was cold and tracks were not long in filling up. He carried his axe on his shoulder (his fiddle he left on our organ).

When he came to the shack he entered and sat down for a few minutes to rest. After lighting his pipe and taking a few draws we went out to commence pioneer sleigh-making.

The boys certainly had all the chores done early, and not a move in the sleigh-making did they miss.

We first of all took the crooks we had cut for runners and with our axes flattened the sides until the crook was about five inches thick. The bottom side where the iron runner was to be and the top side were then flattened until the crook was about six or seven inches deep.

A line with a lead pencil was then drawn very carefully down the centre and with a saw the crook was ripped in two, making two runners the same shape and curve for the front bob. The other crook was then treated in the same way for the hind bob. This was the most difficult part of the woodwork.

After all the woodwork had been done, the ironing, or putting the shoes on the runners, came next. Proper steel shoes were out of the question and so we had to buy two and a half inch wide band-iron about a quarter of an inch thick. Our cook stove was converted into a forge. We had no anvil, but John had a piece of a C.P.R. rail about eight inches long which had been cut off a rail by the section men. These small pieces of railway steel made splendid anvils for the pioneers. So, what with cold chisels, drills, punches and hammers and a great deal of discomfort to the women folk, in having the cook stove turned into a forge, the sleighs were ironed off, the whole job of making occupying a little better than a week. The band iron runners were not nearly so easy running as cast steel. They would stick to the track if the horses stood any time to rest, but they were the best we could do,

Every evening John would, after supper, tell us some funny Scotch stories and the boys would all crowd round to hear and have a laugh. Then the fiddle would be pressed into service

and some more strathspeys and reels played with John's usual vigor.

One evening friend John was humorously boasting of Scotch frugality and told us a story to illustrate.

He said there was a Scotchman who fell very ill. The doctor put him on a very limited diet but at last told both Jock and his wife that he could do no more and that Jock would die. He also said that the sick man could have anything to eat now that he fancied. When the doctor had gone the wife came in with tears in her eyes and asked poor Jock what he could fancy to eat.

Jock said, "Jennie, I'd like some o' the ham ye hae on the shelf." "Oh, Jock, dear," said Jennie, with tears, "anything but that, anything but that; that's for the funeral."

Thus in that sod shack our winter evenings were spent in music, singing, discussing the events of the day, as we learned them, and learning of this great Alberta and its early pioneers on the land.

The sleigh being finished, off we set the next day to get the first load of spruce logs for our house—our own house on the brush homestead.

Before starting out John said: "Be sure and take quite a bit of baled hay wire with you around your stakes and put your pliers in your pockets. You never can tell."

John was right. Experience taught me that there were few breakdowns that a settler couldn't fix with a bit of baled hay wire.

Jolly baled hay wire, trusty old friend,  
How many a break you have helped me to mend,  
How many a sleigh tongue you've helped me to splice,  
Or a split in my axe handle fixed in a trice.  
Should a link in my chain perchance break in two,  
A piece of baled hay wire would make one anew;  
Or if my old harness should sever in twain,  
A stitch of baled hay wire would join it again;  
Or if from my sheepskin the buttons should sever,  
And let in the blasts of the cold winter weather,  
A small piece of wire would the damage repair  
And shut out the chill of the cold winter air.  
Or should my old pipe be unwilling to smoke,  
A poke from the hay wire would clear out the choke;  
Or if from my wagon wheel rolled off the tire,  
'Twas quickly made fast by a piece of hay wire.  
So jolly old hay wire, trusty old friend,  
I ne'er will forget how you helped me to mend.

And so it was that at the close of that wintry day in 1899, as we drove back from the woods on our home-made sleigh, I said, "Whoa, girls; whoa, girls," to my team of black mares. This was the knoll, the spring above, the coulee at the side, where we were to build our house and carve out our destiny in Alberta. So I jumped off the sleigh, threw the blankets on the horses, undid the binder and chain and unloaded the logs.

"Do you know this spot, girls?" I said to my team as I took the lines from under the tongue and patted them on the neck. They pricked forward their ears and old black Bell put her chin on my shoulder.

"I've made a bet, girls. They've bet me this 160 acres of brush against my ten dollars that we can't make a living here and stick it out for three years. Do we win, old Bell?"

They pawed the snow to get away as if anxious to get on the job and win the bet. So throwing my chain around the stakes and putting the blankets on the front bunk where I sat, I gave a chirp and away we went to our sod shack.

Win? Why of course we did. With such friends as that team and John and the neighbors who came and helped me raise my house and stable—how could we help but win?



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## The New Arrival

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**B**OOKS have been written on the pioneers of the west. Empire builders they have been called, and recognition of the hardships they endured has been accorded and praise given, and justly so, but little has been said or written of the part that the women, wives of pioneers, and mothers of the men of today, played in the conquest of this last best west.

Women, who not only shared the hardships and discomforts of pioneer life, not only did the housework, but in many cases helped with the chores, and oftentimes driving a team or a disc or hayrake, and helping to stack the hay and grain, and last but not least, faced childbirth bravely and unflinchingly; faced possible death, knowing in many cases that medical aid was impossible, and from this cause more than one mother has passed to the beyond.

The year 1899 was the beginning of the wet years. Sleepy Creek was narrow in places and had small lakes, swimming holes here and there, but its banks, like the banks of all creeks where there was deep soil, were perpendicular and crossing places had to be made or found where possible, and the trails led to these few crossing places. We didn't travel on the road allowances; we often did not know where the road allowances were. We followed the old high land trails across country. There was a crossing place below my sod shack where I could get to John Deans with a team when necessary.

There were no telephones, but nevertheless interesting local news, especially of the coming of the stork anywhere, managed to get around somehow, and it became known that the stork was expected at the teacher's shack sometime in August, and offers of help from kind neighbors were not slow in coming, and among them friend John's wife across the creek.

There were no doctors nearer than Innisfail or Calgary, but fortunately there lived on a homestead some few miles east of Olds a man, who, though having no "papers" from Regina, had practiced in Michigan, and what the old settlers owe to good old Doc. Kay has not been made known. The Doc. promised me to come if I went after him.

During August it rained continuously. It seemed as if the clouds were so heavy and full that they trailed along the ground, driven by the north-east winds, and the rain came through the

sod roof until the only dry spot was beneath the big centre ridge pole. And they told us it only rained a few days in June!

When it did come a fine day and we saw the sun for a little while, I knew John was alive and he knew we were O.K. because we could see each other hanging out the clothes, etc., to dry, and we could signal though we were not scouts. As it rained inside the shack a day or so after it stopped raining outside, we both moved outside for a while on a fine day.

As August drew on we hoped and prayed for fine weather, but about the fifteenth it closed in and rained in torrents. The prairie was like a sponge, the trails mud, and Sleepy Creek's original banks were nowhere to be seen. The shack was almost an island and our crossing place nearly a quarter of a mile wide.

The barnyard was a foot deep in mud and manure, but we kept the horses in every night.

We now determined to make one dry spot in the shack even if the water did run down the walls inside from the roof. We picked up every available board from the barn and every stable door we could get and placed them on one corner of the roof. This helped greatly, the water only dripping in in two or three places. The head of the bed was placed under the ridge pole and an umbrella over the head with a rubber rug over the rest. This completed our arrangements. We kept the woodpile full up even if we had to commandeer a dry fence pole or two. But it still rained persistently and exasperatingly, and the creek rose higher.

About 3 o'clock in the morning of August 22nd, my wife called me and told me to go for Mrs. Deans across the creek. I lit the lamp and the lantern, called my daughter and the boys. I told my daughter to stay by her mother and said to the boys: "Boys, you keep the stove full of wood—though it's wet we can keep warm, anyway—and take a tomato can and dip the water out of the pond on the floor into a pail and throw it out of doors." In my second story I told you that the floor had sagged because some sleepers had given way, and that this was not an unmixed evil because when it rained through the roof it made a pond about five feet across and three inches deep. It was this pond that the boys were dipping out. Later I wondered why the boys were not dipping, and I found that one of the boys had got tired of dipping and found an easier way. He got an inch bit and bored a hole in the lowest spot and the water all ran through the hole into the dugout we called a cellar. That disposed of the water on the floor.

Putting on my sheepskin and mitts, I took the lantern and waded to the stable, put the wet harness on wet horses, hitched

them to the old buggy and started to find the trail that ran across the creek.

We found it and I turned the horses toward the wide stretch of water. The crossing wasn't very wide, but fortunately the width of water made the current not so swift in the centre. Splash, splash, splash, splash went the horses' feet. Higher and higher came the water. It was now up to horses' shoulders and into the bottom of the buggy. I put my feet up on the seat and held the lines firm. "Steady girls, steady girls. Easy girls, feel your way." I always talked to my horses, especially when we got in a tight spot. They seemed to know what was said. "Steady girls, we must be somewhere near the crossing." Kerplunk, splash. Bell, the off mare, had disappeared, but Colie held the trail and Bell got her feet on the trail again as we swung to the left, but the buggy's right wheel went kerplunk too but we did not upset. "Close call that, girls. Easy now, we're out of the channel and on the flat."

When I reached John's house I make known my mission and very quickly my neighbor's wife got dressed and putting on her rubber coat (still raining) we started back. When we arrived at the edge of the water I had to convince Mrs. Deans that we could navigate the channel. I had to leave her on a knoll and drive across alone and come back again before I could persuade her that she might venture across. So, putting her feet on the cushion and sitting on them so that she would not get wet when the water came in around the dashboard, we managed to get home without mishap.

Then came the journey for good old Doc. Kay. It was just breaking daylight, and through mud, rain and slush the miles wore on until doc's house was reached. "That you, A?" he called out. "Yes," I answered, "how did you know?" "Oh," he answered, "I just thought the affair would come off in this weather."

Lighting his pipe, and wrapping up both himself and his case to keep dry, we retraced our steps, facing the eternal drizzle, sleet and wind, and arrived at the shack where the water was running down the walls and dripping from the roof, except in the one spot where the boards on the roof had made it fairly dry.

Time passed from noon to dark and from dark to midnight, and good old Doc's face looked grave, as it was evident the mother's strength was failing. He whispered something to me about instruments, and there amid the eternal rain, doctor, nurse and mother battled for life, and it was not until the clock said 2 a.m. that this Alberta boy was born.

How many pioneer women, not having medical aid, have passed into the great beyond? And yet, with uncomplaining, unflinching courage, they have entered the valley of the shadow and battled with the king of terrors to bring into being a new human life. And we men call them the weaker sex!

Lest we forget, again I say, All honor to the pioneer mothers of Alberta.



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## Social Life—The Picnic

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**I**T might be of interest to record something of our social life. Apart from church and Sunday school every two weeks, we had three forms of social gatherings and amusements, viz.: picnics, country dances, and schoolhouse debates or entertainments. There is one of each that will not by me be soon forgotten.

About 9 o'clock in the morning of July 1, 1899, a halloo sounded outside our shack and looking out we saw neighbor Pete Jaffray and his wife in their buggy. "Aren't you going to the picnic over east in the grove?" said Pete. "Yes," I answered. "I've just got the horses harnessed and we'll hitch up to the wagon right away." "All right," said Pete, "and your wife can ride in our buggy and I'll ride with you in the wagon."

"What's going to be doing at the picnic, Pete?" I asked. "Oh," he answered, "that young lawyer from Calgary, Mr. R. B. Bennett, is going to give us a talk. He's a good talker, too. He just up last fall and said he was going to run for the Regina house. There were quite a few old stagers running and I'll be darned if he didn't beat the whole bunch. Smart young chap."

So off we went, children and all, across country through brush, mud and sloughs (it was the first wet year), to see the people and hear the young member from Calgary.

When we arrived at the grove, after unhitching we met all the people we knew, and got acquainted with those we didn't know, and got and gave the news and gossip of the district. (We had no telephones.) How the crops looked, how the cows were milking, where the stork might come, and spicey news. "Say, did you hear?" "No, is that so?" "Well, for land's sake." "Yes, sure." "You don't say." When and where the next dance would be, the next quilting bee. What the new minister and teacher were like. How much breaking they'd got done, and oh, a thousand and one things to talk about. Didn't get half done when we had to sit down to dinner enlivened with jokes and stories.

After dinner we sat or stood around the platform and then our new member for Regina legislature stepped up and certainly gave us a stirring address on our Dominion and Do-

minion Day. I think Mr. Bennett's address had something to do with our determination to organize a debating society in our district.

One thing we remembered: he told us, parents and children that we were Empire builders laying the foundations wide and deep. It was well worth while going through mud to hear, and taught the children some history not contained in text books.

Going home we came to a big slough full of water and the old trail went through it. We went around it coming. "Let's try it across," I said to Pete. "It'll save a mile or so." The ladies stayed in the buggy to watch while we plunged in with the wagon.

About a hundred yards from the shore the off mare dropped into a mud hole almost out of sight. Off the wagon Pete and I jumped (Pete was nearly 200 pounds) into the muddy water up to our waists in our one and only best Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes.

Quickly we undid the traces of the nigh mare, pulled the draw bolt, slipped the neck yoke off the tongue, and with a plunge the down mare got to her feet. She was plastered with mud, and so were we, but we were thankful not to lose a horse or have an upset.

"Say, Pete," I said, "we can't go across, so we'll carry the kids back to shore." So the kids got straddled on our shoulders and we waded back to shore with them, to the infinite diversion of the ladies on shore.

We never went out those years without a chain and clevis stowed away to pull either ourselves or someone else out of the mud. We couldn't turn the wagon round; too risky. So I hitched the horses with the chain to the hind end of the wagon. Pete held the tongue and steered the wagon to shore. We sat down to squeeze the water out of our clothes while the ladies chaffed us. But as our pants didn't have any creases in them, and so exhibited the characteristics of the owners, more or less, it didn't matter.

"Is this what you call Empire building?" said Pete. "If it is, the foundations were sure wide and deep; so darned deep we came pretty near not finding bottom."

The day was wearing on, and as we wended our way home the "skitters" were terrible. And as we brushed them away with a green bough, Pete, being a Scotchman, reflected: "I suppose when we're cutting brush, pickin' roots and breakin' land, we're supposed to be Empire building; but where do we come in on the deal?" "Why," I said, "aren't you getting 12½ cents per pound for your butter?" Pete gave a philosophic grunt and a look sideways at me to see if I meant it.

[We presently came to a fork in the trail, and as one trail led to my shack and the other to Pete's, we exchanged passengers, and as the flies were bad we couldn't stop to chat, but I managed to say, "Pete, when you get home, drive up the cows, build a smudge to keep the flies away, sit down to milk, your eyes filled with smoke and the cow hits your head a wallop with its tail and knocks your hat in the mud and plasters your face with slime, and when you've got your pail nearly full of milk and the cow makes off to the brush 'cause the wind changed and the flies bit, and she upsets your milk, Pete, old boy, I hope it'll help some to remember you're an Empire builder and are laying the foundations wide and deep."

PETE



*"A true Empire builder, who thought the  
'foundations were wide and deep'."*

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# The Country Dance

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I HAVE stated that another form of our social life, where we met each other and exchanged views and got acquainted, was the country dance or surprise party. When it is considered that often our nearest neighbors were a mile or more distant, and rural telephones were not in existence, it will easily be seen that any legitimate form of recreation that caused neighbors so far distant, to get together, to get to know each other better, to roll the mists away, and also to keep settlers who were more or less tied to their land, from getting into ruts, did good service and encouraged a community spirit.

Modern dances, such as fox trots, dog trots, turkey trots and other trots, tangoes or shimmies, were unknown to us. The majority of the dances were square dances, cotillons, quadrilles, with a waltz or military schottische thrown in by way of variety.

My old friend John Deans nearly always "showed up" at these dances, and his ruddy, rotund face beamed with delight as we together, two fiddles and an autoharp, scraped out such music as "Soldier's Joy," "Irish Washerwoman," "The Girl I Left Behind Me"; but when in the exuberance of his music John entered on one of those peculiar Scotch strathspeys, I was compelled to leave him alone in his glory, and watch with amazement his bow produce those hemi-demi-semi-quavers for which that class of music is famed.

Perhaps the most important person at the dance next to the fiddler was the "caller," floor manager or director of ceremonies. The figures in the cotillons had to be "called off," and few dances proceeded without the "caller." In fact, upon his pep and wit depended much of the success of the party. His lls would often be in a sort of rhyme to the music; and in the third set or breakdown (I never knew just why it was called breakdown), he excelled himself. To the vivacious tune of the "Irish Washerwoman" he would call:

"Ladies lead up to the right of the ring,  
And when you get there you may balance and swing;  
Then back to your place, remember the call,  
Allemande left and promenade all."

And when he called "balance all." Oh, boys, no more noiseless marking time, with slippers. Every gent in the dance,



old or young, was expected to "hoe it down," to emphatically exhibit his best step dance, and astonishing were some of the steps. But on the last note of the bar we all came down with a mighty bang on the floor, even we who did not know any steps could come in on this. Sometimes the caller would sing out a humorous call such as "Swing that girl with the great big feet," to the merriment of those who weren't doing the swinging. The tunes for waltzes were very often the refrains of some well known song, such as "Ehren on the Rhine" or "Dream Faces," and the ladies would sing the refrain as they danced, which had a very pleasing effect. We were very much of a big happy family.

One dance in particular has left a lasting impression on me. One afternoon in the fall of 1900, the boys came in and announced there was going to be a dance at Mr. ——— over the river, and could they have the team to go? "Why, of course," I answered, "and why can't I go too?" So mother baked a cake and on the evening of the eventful night the horses were hitched up, hay and blankets put in the box, and off we started after chores were done, for a seven or eight mile drive to a farmhouse situated in the tall timbers.

The good lady of the house was a real character, and although she has now passed to the great beyond (tired out, found dead in bed), she deserves mention. Their farm was almost totally a wood lot, poplar and spruce. If doing hard work clearing timber and brush, milking cows and being able with equal celerity to swing an axe or a fist, and last, but not least, having a kind heart, constitutes an "Empire builder," then our hostess comes in that category. She was not to be trifled with, had a vocabulary that Dan O'Connell might envy. She was tall, gaunt and sinewy. She hadn't much use for lawyers. I once saw her in Calgary, called as a witness for the defence by our prominent lawyer, Mr. A. L. Smith. He gave her up as a bad job and turned her over to Mr. J. Short. He also was nonplussed.

We arrived at the house, the usual cotillions, dances and waltzes were gone through and mine hostess was in great trim and everybody chatty and happy. The caller said the next dance would be a military schottische, "ladies' choice." Mine hostess came right over to me and asked me to have this dance with her. Of course, I couldn't refuse; it would neither be polite nor prudent. So giving the lady my arm we walked around the room with the others, chatting until the fiddlers should tune their fiddles and begin. I glanced over towards the fiddlers' corner and fancied I could see a sort of suppressed mirth and malicious grin. The military schottische in those days was

a real healthy exercise. One, two, three, kick; one, two, three, kick; and then a sort of hop around, first on one foot and then on the other. Presently the fiddlers struck up that tune we knew as "How's Your Uncle David." You kicked when you came to "David." So grabbing each other round the waist, off we went, and when we joined hands for the hop around, boys, what a grip she had. I don't think I swung her around. I rather thought she was doing the swinging.

But being a tall lady, after a few rounds, she was not satisfied with having her arm round my waist; she suddenly placed her arm around my neck and imprisoned it as in a vise in the joint of her elbow. Although I couldn't turn my head around, I could hear that the rest of the dancers had retired and we had the floor to ourselves, the centre of admiration, as it were. We needed plenty of room, anyway. This was mine hostess's opportunity for a good dance, and the music not being as quick as she would like, she called out to the fiddlers, "Hoop 'er up, boys, hoop 'er up." And they surely did. From moderato to allegro and from allegro to prestissimo, until the sweat rolled down off the end of my nose and chin, and down the back of my neck. One, two, three, kick; one, two, three, kick. Would those d——n fiddlers never quit? Were they having a marathon test of fiddling endurance? The giggles and roars were not all at funny yarns!

At last the music stopped and, of course, I led mine hostess to a chair and told her how much I enjoyed the dance. She reciprocated by saying "She didn't know when she had such a dance." I didn't, either, for that matter.

I went over to the fiddlers' corner and demanded what in the d——l made 'em fiddle so long? All the consolation I got was, "Hoop 'er up, boys, hoop 'er up."

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## The Debate

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I HAVE stated that Mr. R. B. Bennett's able and instructive address at our picnic in 1899 was a stimulus to the formation of our debating society in the schoolhouse. We did afterwards form such a society and it was one of the chief means in winter in getting together and knowing each other better, and also of learning something.

There was one character in our locality that was always much interested in our debates. His name was James Murray (now also some years passed away). Mr. Murray, or "Jimmy," as he called himself, was an ardent free trader.\* He hailed from the county of Northumberland, England, town of Belford, from which place also came the most eloquent and able champion of free trade that Canada has\*—Dr. Michael Clark. "Jimmy" told me he saw the doctor when he wasn't many days old. He also said that he (Jimmy) was 12 years old before he tasted wheat bread, and his first vote was for abolition of corn laws. He told me his landlord came to him and said, "Don't you see, Jimmy, if I could get a bit more for my wheat I should be able to give you a bit more wage." "I'm weel aware o' that, Mr. Howie, weel aware o' that. You'd be a lot more able but not a bit more willin'." As long as you can get men for eighteen shillin' a week you'll no gie Jimmy twenty-five." Mr. Murray's politics were his religion. I once heard him in Sunday school teaching the Bible class (he was a great Bible student), tell them the publicans were the tax gatherers, the high tariff men of their day. So it happened that on Friday night Mr. Murray brought over and introduced me to Dr. Clark, who had recently come from England and settled on a homestead six miles west of mine on the little Red Deer river.

As we were going to have a debate that night in the schoolhouse and Mr. Murray had told me a little of the ability of Dr. Clark as an orator in England, I requested the doctor to stay for the occasion and be our "literary critic" for the evening and he very kindly consented. I thought it a splendid opportunity for us, who were absolute tyros and novices in debate and public speaking, to get in touch with, and hear a gentleman who was not only an orator and a scholar, but who had been asso-

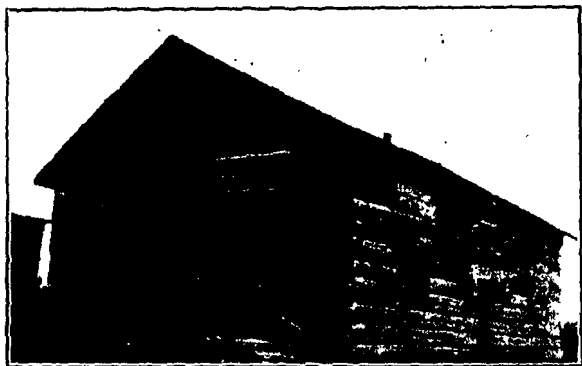
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\*Dr. Clark has also passed away.

ciated with such men as Morley and Gladstone, and I think I am right in saying that on the platform of that little old log schoolhouse (now also removed) Dr. Clark made his first public speech in Canada.

We had never aspired to have a literary critic or anything of that nature. We didn't quite know and certainly didn't quite appreciate the function of "literary critic." We had not as yet aspired to debate current problems and so that evening the subject was the threadbare and timeworn subject, "Resolved that married life is a failure." It so happened that the leader of the affirmative was a married man who had his third wife, and his wife was also leader of the negative.

The schoolhouse was full, it was warm and we were going to have a little tea after the debate. After the songs and recitations had been given the great debate was staged and many



*Where Dr. Michael Clark made his first public speech in Canada.*

and amusing were the arguments pro and con. But the leader of the affirmative, to prove as a clincher that marriage was a failure, quoted old Solomon for an undisputed example of the failure of marriage and married life, and unmercifully did the leader of the affirmative belabor old Solomon.

The last item on the program was the address of the literary critic, Dr. Clark. We had never had anyone tell us our weaknesses and faults, and we didn't quite understand that gentle irony in clear, calm and incisive tones which afterward made the doctor both so famous and so feared in the House of Commons at Ottawa.

He reserved his climax, his final touch, for the leader of the affirmative, whose third wife was leading the negative. "And now," said the doctor, as nearly as I can recall, "and now what shall we say about the leader of the affirmative? Here we find him blackguarding poor old Solomon, and he himself is following in his footsteps as fast as he can."

Like thunder that follows the flash, the house was still for a few seconds, then pandemonium broke loose and it was some time before the luckless leader of the affirmative could be persuaded to see the humor of the situation.

The criticisms did us a world of good. We grew and even afterward challenged the town of Olds and the late Commissioner Samis, who was conducting the paper "Olds Oracle", came out to give us battle.

"But past is all our fame, the very spot  
Where many a time we triumphed is forgot."



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## The Tramp

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MANY years ago, one cold winter's day in February, on our farm near Olds, the southeast wind had been blowing fiercely, filling the air with stinging particles of ice, and drifting the trails full.

The sky was cloudy and leaden. The cattle and horses had been let out for water and as quickly put back into their stables and glad to get there. About half past two we had our chores done, wood piled up, water in the pails and all stoves going full blast. Two of the boys were playing a game of chess. My wife and daughter had drawn up closer to the big box stove and I had just poked it up and put in a big chunk of dry tamarac to give some extra heat against the bitter wind, when the form of a man passed the window.

"Some peddler or tramp," said my wife. I went to the wood-shed door, opened it and bade him come in. The dog, Tige, growled or whined a bit uneasily as we came out of the woodshed into the kitchen. Tige was a pretty good judge of character and didn't know quite what to make of the newcomer, so he whined and sniffed suspiciously as the man took the broom and brushed the snow from his boots.

He was an odd-looking customer. He was of medium height, rather thick set, long brown hair, a month's growth of beard on his face, blue eyes with a restless twitching look in them and an hysterical laugh when he spoke. His speech was sudden and short. He was poorly clad, no overcoat, not even a sheepskin coat, so he turned up the collar of his coat to keep his neck warm. He had a pack on his back in which he carried all his belongings, and lastly, a stout willow stick about four feet long, to help him walk through the snow.

After throwing his pack on the floor, he took a proffered chair near the stove and thawed himself out. Tige applied his nose to the pack, but his eye to the stranger, but could make nothing of either. Neither could we, but we could see the corner of a book sticking out of a little hole in the pack.

"Have you had any dinner?" said my wife. "No, not today, ma'am," he said. So she got him a good bowl of hot soup and such a meal as we had.

I inquired his name, "My name is 'Tom Brown,'" he said. "You've read 'Tom Brown's School Days,' haven't you?" He

spoke tersely and jerkily. I intimated that we all had. "Well, I'm Tom Brown." "A somewhat common name," I said. "Oh, no," he said, "I wasn't Tom Brown last year, I was Roosevelt." The boys stopped playing chess and looked up, first at him, then at me. The wife and daughter both stopped darning socks, and even Tige, who was lying down with his head on his paws, rolled his eyes up at me. One thought as if by telepathy passed round: "Nutty, nobody home."

To humor him and break the awkwardness I said, "How in the world can you be Tom Brown this year and Roosevelt last year?"

"Well, you see," he said, "I was walking over the prairie last year and I picked up a wild rose and put it in my coat. Wasn't that a rose on the veldt? Isn't the veldt the prairie? Yes, I was Roosevelt last year."

This drew a snicker from the boys. "Not so slow either," I said. There was method in his madness.

"What are you doing, and where are you going?" I inquired.

"Oh, I just travel round visiting people and countries and now I am travelling south."

In about half an hour he got ready to depart. "It's early yet and anyway you'd better stay," I said.

"No, I must be going; I'll make the next house south."

So Tom, or Roosevelt, shouldered his pack, turned up his coat collar, pulled his cap over his ears and his mittens over his hands, grabbed his willow stick and, after thanking us for his warm up and meal, stood looking wistfully out of the window at the cold darkening sky and drifting trail. He turned suddenly and said, "No, I'm not Tom Brown or Roosevelt now, I'm Newman, Cardinal Newman. Don't you know him?" and he repeated:

"Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,

Lead Thou me on;

The night is dark and I am far from home,

Lead Thou me on."

"That's me, I'm Newman," and he opened the door suddenly and went out into the gathering gloom.

We all stood looking at each other, wondering at the words so aptly spoken. After a while my wife said, "Daddy, go bring him back and make him stay all night. He'll freeze on the trail." I put on my sheepskin coat and ran out, down the lane, across the fields, but he was a couple of hundred yards ahead and going faster than I could. I shouted, "Tom! Roosevelt! Newman!" but he couldn't or wouldn't hear.

The next day I inquired of my neighbor and he told me that a crazy chap reached their house about sundown, half frozen, and stayed all night, but they couldn't tell whether his name was Brown, or Newman, or what his business was, he talked so strange.

The game of chess was never finished. That night we talked around the stove about what manner of man this stranger was, what history he had, if he were "some unhappy master, whom unmerciful disaster followed fast and followed faster," or if he were just one of the great sea of flotsam and jetsam of society who are driven from pillar to post and for whom we, as a community, have no place, except the jail.

And now, whenever our broken family circle, on a night like that night, sing "Lead, Kindly Light," we always think of our strange visitor, Tom Brown, Roosevelt, or Newman, wonder where he is, or what his name is this year, and say, "God shield him, wherever he is."





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## Our Sorrows

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**B**UT we had our sorrows, as well as "our homely joys and destiny obscure." Nobody was very rich and no one very poor, and there seemed to pervade a sort of Christian communism; we helped one another.

Did a new settler build a house? We had a bee. Was one sick? Someone felt it a duty to "set up with him and do his chores." Did someone die? Some neighbors performed the last sad necessities for burial. We didn't care much for theology, but just helped to bear one another's burdens.

The wet years were from 1899 to a number of succeeding years. The rivers were swift and full to overflowing in the latter part of June and to the middle of July. Bridges were few and miles upon miles apart, the fords were shifty and not always safe.

Frank Peck, a young man about twenty-five, had a job of breaking some land on the other side of the Little Red Deer river. He had a saddle pony and desired to get to his work on the other side. Although his friends thought it risky, Frank thought his pony would carry him safely across the ford. Some wanted him to catch hold of the pony's tail and let the pony tow him across. But Frank mounted his trusty horse and waded in. About half way across the pony lost his footing and rolled over. Frank was thrown off and came up on the gravel bar, but he seemed to have got a kick somehow from his horse that dazed him. The water on the bar was a little above his waist. He stood for a moment and then fell over into the swift current and was carried away and seen no more.

Next year a settler, Bert White (a British man-o'-war sailor at that) was compelled to cross from the other side to get some provisions, for the children had to have something to eat, and—

"Men must work and women must weep,  
Though the river bar be foaming."

He tried the ford with a team and wagon, which was found next day on the shore, and poor Bert was found some weeks afterward about 18 miles further down. Next year we got a bridge through the efforts of John Simpson, M.L.A.

About two weeks after poor Frank was drowned we were having a Twelfth of July picnic in a grove when word came that

Frank had been found, caught in the branches of an overhanging spruce. There was only one thing to do—go and get him, before the swift current swept him away.

We had no undertakers. Neighbors felt it a sacred duty to help one another. To have offered money would have been an insult. Burying our dead had not as yet been commercialized for profit's sake. I do not cast any reflection on our undertakers. They are a necessity in the crowded cities, but we did these things out of neighborly sympathy.

While we had our little "God's acre" some miles further down, yet many of our pioneers said:

"I want no silver mounted hearse,  
But just a student preacher read a bit of Scripser verse,  
And find some sunny hillside where the water willow leans,  
And plant me on my homestead, where I hustled in my jeans."

And here and there as one travels through the country may be seen a small plot about four feet by twelve, fenced off with spruce poles and in it some pioneer sleeps.

Two or three of us at once left the picnic and went some distance down the river and lodged in the branches were the remains of poor Frank. One of us crawled out on the overhanging trunk and slipped the noose of a rope round an arm and we slowly towed him to shore. We put a sheet under him and placed him on an old stable door and took him to an uninhabited shack close by. The odour was—whew!!

The task was a gruesome one at best, but the pioneer spirit of brotherhood demanded that it be done. A neighbor drove some fifteen miles—thirty both ways—for a coffin and Pioneer R. D. Reid and myself were detailed to do the rest that evening in the shack.

While I am not a total abstainer, and have never been accused of drinking, a bottle of good Scotch was never so welcome as on that occasion when some kind hearted and very thoughtful friend slipped us one in at the door and then "beat it," and at the conclusion of that sad but malodorous task, we hadn't so much as a sniff left, in the bottom of the bottle. Robert had long and heavy whiskers and I had a heavy long moustache, which fact we both regretted, as you will see.

The hearse was a wagon, and the trails were bad with many mud holes, so we had to drive some ten miles through brush around mud holes, across creeks and muskegs to the cemetery.

Going to a soldier's funeral they play the Dead March, coming away they play a lively air. Perfectly right. The human mind cannot stand being keyed up to pitch, and even

this distressing event after the funeral had a sort of grim humor. During the whole proceedings Bob and myself had both been keyed up to pitch. After the funeral, at home the reaction set in, and sitting down to tea, I was about to drink when it seemed that my moustache retained some of the odor of the shack. I got up, and taking hot water and soap gave my moustache a good hot wash.

King Midas tried in vain to elude the golden touch by quickly drinking a cup of coffee, but the golden touch had nothing on the speed of this odor. I tried to gobble a drink quickly. It was still there. Pure nervous reaction. I went to bed supperless, to dream the whole thing over again. In a day or so it wore off.

Then I bethought me of friend Bob with his bushy whiskers. If in his case the strength of the odor was in direct proportion to the area and mass of whiskers, I was thankful I had only a moustache.

Bob lived about a mile or more from me, and having no telephones, I strolled up to see how Bob was faring. The grim humor of the thing was dawning on me.

"Good morning, Mrs. Reid, how's Bob? Is he in?"

"Indeed, he's not well at all," she said. "He thinks he's got kinda pizenized."

Just then Bob showed up, looking somewhat slim.

"What's the matter, Bob?" I queried. "Dunno," he said. "Can't eat nothing. Don't seem to be able to get the blamed thing out'n my whiskers."

"Did you wash 'em?" I asked, scarcely able to repress a grin.

"Wash 'em," said Mrs. Reid. "He washed 'em and almost biled 'em."

"I was the same, Bob. Just nervous reaction. You'll be all right in a day or so," I said.

"Do you think so?" he said, more cheerfully. But he looked somewhat wistfully at the table and then at me, and then he proceeded to take a plug of tobacco out of his pocket and cut a good sized chunk and place it in its proper place in his mouth.

"I see you can still chew, and that's more than I could do," I said.

"Sbout all I kin do," he said sorrowfully. "If we had a couple of snorts of what was in that bottle it might help some," I remarked. "I believe it would," he said.

There are still a few, a very few, left of the old pioneers, who, although they have young hearts, are getting older and fewer. Their day is done. It is the evening of life.

The days of sod shacks, home-made sleighs, simple funerals and winding trails are gone, and although a new generation with autos, telephones, airplanes, radio and co-operative marketing is rising, and rightly so, it is to be hoped that the brotherliness of the old pioneers will still persist.

Not long since I stopped at the old cemetery. The gate had one hinge off, and lifting it open I plodded through the thick undergrowth of prairie grass and peavine, overhung with poplar and willow trees, and as in some neglected spot I read the names of James Murray, John Deans and other pioneers, I could not help repeating, with apologies to Gray:

Beneath these poplar trees and willow's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,  
Each in his narrow cell forever laid  
The staunch forefathers of Alberta sleep.

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys and destiny obscure,  
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short but simple annals of the poor.



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## Ye Olde Tyme Mountie

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**T**WENTY-FIVE or thirty years ago the mountie as we called him, the red coat of the R.N.W.M.P. not only played an important part in keeping law and order but in looking after the interests of the sparse and scattered settlers of the brush and timbered districts, and the majority of the red coats possessed the somewhat rare gift of tact and discretion. Such a one was Billy Deans as he was called, stationed at one of the towns along the C. and E.

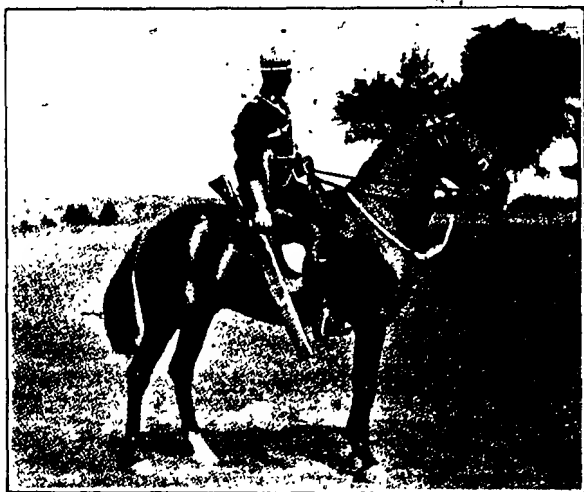
Those of us who took up homesteads in the brush and timber and not in the open prairie often had very hard times to keep the pot boiling and make any headway on our brush homesteads, and although certain territorial game laws were enacted and the mountie instructed to enforce them, yet children's hungry mouths had to be filled and the larder was often empty (no relief department) and the good housewife like Old Mother Hubbard, when she went there, the cupboard was bare and so the poor bairns got none. Upon one of his rounds Billy came to a settler where he knew the cupboard was bare and, although chicken season was a long way off, there hung, heads down, right at the rough home-made door, half a dozen fat prairie chickens that no doubt in a short time would have been made into a savory pot pie to feed some hungry little mouths.

Though the majesty of the law was personified in Red Coat Billy, a human heart beat beneath his red coat and he had not read about Nelson's blind eye at the battle of the Baltic for nothing. Consternation, fear and trembling took possession of the guilty boy. Consternation at the unexpected appearance of the red coat, fear that they would lose the pot pie for which their mouths watered, and trembling lest in vindication of the majesty of the Queen's law they might be hauled up and fined, and they hadn't a cent to bless themselves with, but Billy said afterwards "I didn't want to see the d——n chickens hanging up there, though I pretty nearly ran my nose right into their feathers; perhaps they were Plymouth rocks." So the kids had a savory pot pie after all and they always had a smile for Billy.

And, oh, well do I remember one fine morning in September, or perhaps it was the last of August, as we looked out of our homestead door, there near the edge of our little oat field were

a beautiful pair of spiked horns. Oh, boys, we hadn't had any meat for I don't know how long, and harvest right on.

Well, the rifles were got down in haste (they were always kept bright for emergencies) and the boys disappeared among the poplar and willow brush, for at the least sound the horns had sped into the poplar bluff. After a while two sharp cracks were heard and presently the boys returned. (This is one reason why our Canadian boys gave such good accounts of themselves with their rifles in the late war.) The old buggy was trotted out and the team hitched up and it too vanished in the edge of the bluff, but presently re-appeared and made its way to the edge of the coulee near the house and the pair of horns were carefully lifted



*"Nelson had a blind eye."*

out and hung up in a tree in the coulee while a lookout was kept for inquisitive eyes, and the rest of the stuff below the horns was hastily skinned. But you say that "it" wouldn't keep in hot August weather, and what a shame to waste such precious food. Ah, friend, Canadian boys here, as in the war, were always resourceful. Once more the buggy was brought into action and it was laden with a number of parcels carefully wrapped up and the buggy made its way to a few of the "faithful" and they were called out and it was whispered from mouth to ear with a significant nod, "prairie mutton." No, no, friend, not a morsel was lost. Scott-Nearing, when here, said we had cultivated the

acquisitive qualities to the extreme and needed to cultivate the "sharing qualities." That's what we were cultivating. "Cast thy prairie mutton on thy neighbor's doorstep and it will return after many days." I don't know whether this is an exact scripture quotation or not, but the prairie mutton did return after many days—not so many either—as soon as our meatless neighbors saw another pair of spiked horns in his oats.

"But where does the mountie—where does Billy come in?" you rightfully ask.

Once upon a time a good housewife was busy cooking dinner for a hungry family a nice juicy portion of the said prairie mutton when a mountie rode up and asked to stay for dinner. Couldn't refuse, of course, so we all sat down to



*"He didn't lose his pot-pie"*

mutton steak. Wasn't it delicious? But, although diplomatic relations were a bit strained at first, yet it was made more appetizing by the presence of Her Majesty's Royal Northwest Mounted Police. The mountie, with a wink, said it was the most juicy and tender piece of, ah, ahem, meat, that he had tasted in a long while, and took a second helping. He wanted to pay for his dinner, but, of course, that couldn't be thought of, but somehow under the plate of the youngest boy a quarter was found. "Ye good olde mountie."

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## The Storm

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Alberta, to the newcomers of '98, in early summer, was a delightful contrast to the rough and crowded East. The rolling prairies bounded only by the horizon and an occasional bluff of poplar trees, were covered with long waving grass and dotted with wild prairie flowers. There bloomed the bleeding hearts, the tiger lillies, the blue bells, the yellow buffalo beans, the violets, the purple peavine, all aglow in the bright sunshine and cloudless sky, making a veritable thick carpet of verdure upon which the contented and sleek cattle lay, and with closed eyes peacefully chewed their cud, while in lazy "Sleepy Creek" the mallard ducks quacked and the little ducklings answered "peep, peep", as they swam to and fro, occasionally diving their heads beneath the surface into the mud and grass below, to find a snail or other choice morsel, and at the same time some sentinel drake would stop and lift his head high in the air, if haply he could see some unusual movement, or hear some warning sound of danger.

Such was the picture the prairies presented in the middle of the afternoon of a hot sultry day towards the end of June, 1899. Our garden, and those of our somewhat distant neighbors, were making promising progress. The potatoes were showing signs of coming into flower, the cabbages and cauliflowers had taken good root after transplanting and had lusty stalks, and all promised a good supply for our winter use. In the fields the grain, with its dark green leaves, was beginning to show signs of the shot blade and here and there a plant more adventurous than the rest seemed to lift its long green leaf high into the air, as if seeking for a breath of cool air or a drink of dew. I have often noticed that in a grain field before the shot blade appeared, on a close hot day a plant here and there would seemingly have a sort of independent voluntary action, and in some unaccountable manner one of its leaves would seem to lift itself into the air apart from all the rest, till I almost thought they had a sort of plant consciousness.

On the sod roof of the log shack, the bold ball mustard, with its yellow flower, drooped somewhat in the still smothering atmosphere, and the very chickens spread out their wings and opened their bills to get a cool breath, while the old mother hen in the coop clucked to her young chickens to come into the



shade. Even we humans took the pail at the end of the long well-rope to get a pail of ice water, for down thirty feet the ice of winter had not thawed entirely from the sides of the cribbing. In all this beauty of color and life and amid this stillness and smothering heat, there was among horses and cattle and even ourselves a feeling of uneasiness; some unexplained premonition of coming disaster, and away out on the western horizon there appeared a cloud, at first not bigger than a man's hand, but it swiftly increased in size and blackness and seemed driven by some mighty unseen impelling force. As it rose swiftly above the horizon and began to cover the western sky, it seemed like an evil spirit, and men and horses and cattle turned to look with almost a feeling of foreboding fascination.

Before the swiftly rolling blackness, there appeared a long rolling white cloud, shaped like a gigantic cigar and from out the blackness darted sharp forks of lightning, and rumblings of distant thunder came muttering on the air. The rolling blackness, like the chariot of Satan, rolled swiftly onward and now covered the face of the sun. While we gazed at the white rotating cigar, the advance patrol, suddenly there came from the white cloud into the sweltering heat, a blast as if from the Arctic regions, a blast as swift as it was cold, lifting papers, rubbish and boards high into the air and chilling us right to the bone. We all sought shelter in the shack, while horses turned their tails to the oncoming storm. The little chicks ran under their mother's wing in the little hencoop.

Onward came the white rolling infernal cigar-cloud, and it seemed to touch the ground and the blackness grew blacker until the whole sky was blackness when out from the heaven there came a blinding flash, followed immediately by a crash like a battery of artillery at close range. The velocity of the wind increased to a hurricane, the rain came down in torrents, and the second crash brought hail as large as marbles in sheets, the next crash brought devastating hail as large as walnuts, wind-driven with the force of grape-shot out of a cannon, cutting to pieces every living plant in sight and breaking windows wherever it came against them. Again and yet again this terrific bombardment, accompanied by blinding flashes of forked lightning and deafening crashes of thunder, flailed the ground to a pulp, and continued for over half an hour until the ground was white with the hail to a depth of over four inches. The crashes grew less in force and number by degrees, and at last the warm sun came out again and the storm passed on to continue its terrific devastation to other fields, cutting a strip about a mile wide and ten to twelve miles long. Then we ventured out to see what was left. While the size of the hail was as small as marbles

and as big as walnuts, yet we picked up a few that measured three inches across or nine inches around, made up of five or six smaller stones frozen together in the fierce whirling they had undergone in the cloud before striking the ground.

Alas! the poor little chicks in the coop were all either drowned or chilled to death. In the garden, upon which we depended for our winter vegetables, not a potato to be seen, of the cabbages, only a few torn pieces of leaves driven into the ground, and what of the flourishing grainfield that but an hour since had proudly lifted its leaves to the sun? Only a black field of earth was left, with nothing on it except a surface indented all over with holes like huge smallpox marks, where the lashing hail had been driven deep into the soil after having cut to pieces the grain so that not a vestige was visible.

And what of the luxuriant prairie grass, with its beautiful colors of wildflowers that spread like a thick carpet over the ground but an hour ago? Nothing left but the top of the prairie sod, not a pound of hay could we cut there now for winter use for our cattle,—Yes—and walking next day along the edge of "Sleepy Creek," we counted dozens of little dead ducklings floating on the bays of the creek. And the horses came up to the barn with lumps on their backs as big as walnuts, where the hail had struck them, and woe betide any settler coming from town, if he were caught with his team in that terrible storm of '99.

The old schoolhouse had every window in the west side smashed, and even the gable ends had dints where the hail was driven against the boards, and the marks remained for years after. There was in one corner of the crossroads a clump, about one-quarter of an acre, of small poplar trees from six to ten feet high. Every leaf was stripped, branches broken and bark peeled off and bruised so that the whole clump died, but new settlers would scarcely credit our story that the hail-storm of '99 killed the bluff.

Well the potatoes did come on again, and we had a small crop, and the grain-field came on so as to be cut for green feed, but no upland hay was cut on the prairie, only in the sloughs did we cut hay for our cattle for winter.

Every year some district gets the hail, though not so severe as the terrible storm of '99. Though this was the most severe storm I have ever seen, yet on more than one occasion have I seen the farmer in his wheat-field; when it was near maturity, pick a few heads of wheat, rub it in his hands, blow away the chaff, and look joyfully at the fast ripening kernels and say—"Ready to cut in a day or two," and before an hour had passed, it was but a broken and bruised field of empty straw. No crop

for him that year—and he wondered how the bairns were to be fed and clothed until another crop could be reaped or how the store bills now due were to be met.

The advertisements and glowing descriptions of the Canadian West are pictured in pamphlets, lectures and even in Government Atlas, but none of the difficulties or hardships from hail or frost or drought are mentioned. Only one side—the pleasant side, is told and described, and it is not to our credit that the difficulties and set-backs and even hardships are not fairly and honestly told to prospective settlers. Partial truth is the worst form of deception.



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# Other Human Stories

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## Our Man

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A WIDESPREAD and overwhelming change in the political ideas of the electorate when expressed at the polls is termed a landslide. Such a political landslide occurred in Alberta in 1921 when the apparently secure Liberal administration suffered an overwhelming defeat, and what is now known as the U.F.A. or farmer government was launched with a tremendous majority into the Alberta Legislature. I hardly know who were the most astonished, the Liberals or the farmers.

The causes of this landslide, the political events that precipitated it, have been accounted for in many ways, often according to the political faith of those who were endeavoring to account for it. True it is that the victory of Mr. Gardiner, in Medicine Hat, and that of Mr. A. Moore, in Cochrane, where both Liberals and Conservatives united to stem the rising tide, were the shadows cast before that heralded the coming events, but these victories neither warned the old parties nor explained the fundamental causes.

Being somewhat curious to find out from the farmers themselves how they accounted for the clean sweep, I visited my old stamping grounds in homestead days near the town of Olds which had been represented by Hon. Duncan Marshall, who was the Minister of Agriculture and was instrumental in having the Olds Agricultural College built at Olds. Here was a strong man, an able speaker and a Cabinet Minister, yet he was overwhelmingly defeated.

I visited an old resident farmer whom we will call Sam. "Well, Sam," I asked, "what made you want to get rid of Duncan and how in the world did you do it?" So Sam gave me the story from the farmer's point of view.

"It's like this. We got it into our heads that Marshall was put on to us by the higher-ups at Edmonton, that somehow the thing had been concocted by the politicians up there, and we just naturally woke up and decided to have a man of our own choice, not one foisted on us by the higher-ups. So we had a meeting and we decided to run a man of our own and Nels Smith was our man. Now, as he was our man, we had to buckle to and get him elected. There was no one else to do it but ourselves—no money coming from anywhere, but just our own selves to depend on. Everyone that had a car got his gas-tank filled up the night

before and first thing in the morning we were ready to go. The women got busy on the phone and every one that hadn't a car or couldn't get out a car was sent to get him. By six o'clock we had every vote polled in the district, and from what I can make out it was all over the same. We were bound to get Nels Smith in just because he was our man.

"Why, even old man Whitelock, who was 80 and almost bedridden with 'rheumatiz,' got to vote. We didn't like to overlook the old man so we thought we'd ask him anyway. A car was sent and the old man asked if he'd like to vote. 'Yes, boys,' he said, 'I'd like to case a vote for our man.' So a mat-



*"He cast his last vote for 'Our Man'."*

tress was procured and the old man placed on it and carefully and tenderly carried to the car and as carefully driven to the school house where the poll was held. When they got there two stalwarts held the old pioneer under the arms and slowly helped him to go before the D.R.O.'s table. No scrutineer asked him any questions and the D.R.O. gave him his ballot in silence and allowed the two stalwarts to still hold him up while he slowly walked to mark his ballot. There was even a suspicion of moisture in some eyes, but never a word was said. After he

had handed in his ballot he said, 'It may be my last vote, boys, but it's for our man.' It was the old man's last vote. He now lies where so many of the old pioneers lie, but he gloried in doing his bit in helping to elect our man."

To my mind this idea of our man is the foundation stone of the success of the U.F.A. movement. Let the U.F.A. but keep its feet on the ground and not be subjected to domination from above, but leave the people free to choose our man and also accept the responsibility, success will attend the efforts—if every candidate chosen is *OUR MAN*.



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## The Child

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**I** ONCE taught a rural school in Alberta. There came to me a barefoot boy with face of tan, who had to get up at four in the morning. He got the cows, cleaned the stables, helped to milk, harnessed the horses, separated the milk, fed the calves and pigs, got in wood and water, had breakfast, then, after a walk by way of exercise, came to school.

One day I heard a titter. The boy was fast asleep with his head on his arm, but his fingers still held his pencil, and were moving in spasmodic jerks, making funny marks on the paper, writing in his sleep!

This caused the titter. No! No! he didn't get a licking. I didn't even wake him up. He slept on. After school he had more potatoes to hoe, more cows to get and milk, more calves and pigs to feed, more horses to unharness, more cream to separate, more wood to split, more water to get in, then these few chores done, go to bed.

Today he lies under a white cross in France, having given his life in defence of those institutions he never had a chance to enjoy.

"Knowledge to his eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll.  
Chill penury repressed his noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of his soul."

My objective is that every child should have the opportunity to attend our educational institutions, from the kindergarten to the university, irrespective of its parents' finances. The child is our greatest asset. He has social rights. We must see that he not only may, but **can** enjoy them. I know of no more important measure, none so far reaching as this.



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## The Service Button

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A COMMERCIAL dropped into the garage at Didsbury the other day, and after discussing the merits of his wares, I remarked that he was lame.

"Yes," he said, "a piece of shrapnel caught my foot, and now I am lame for life."

"Why don't you wear your service button, then?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't wear that any more," he said.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Well, I fancied that somehow or other it didn't help business, and so I took it off," he said.

"Do you mean to say," I said, "that a grateful people (sic) in business discriminate against returned soldiers?"

"Well," he said, "it seems to me that way."

At that point the foreman of the garage butted in with "I don't wear mine either, and I don't intend to again."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "when I came back I was in the town of \_\_\_\_\_ in Ontario, and I went from place to place for some days hunting for a job, but it seemed to me that when they saw the button they didn't want me, so one night I took off the button and the next day I went in search of work again, and I got work in one of the most prominent factories in \_\_\_\_\_, so I haven't worn my button since."

"A fellow commercial of mine," said the drummer, "wears his button wrong side front. The boys recognize the button, but the trade doesn't, so it does not prove a hindrance to business."

"Surely," I said, "people can't so soon and so easily forget the sacrifices you fellows made and the hell you went through? But even if so, how do you account for this strange attitude of mind?" I asked.

"Well," said the commercial, "at the commencement of the war a large number of so-called ne'er-do-wells, scum, riff-raff, etc., enlisted, and for those that returned, the war only increased those tendencies. The army wasn't a place to make a saint out of a sinner, and business is business, you know."

"But," I remonstrated, "whatever motive these men may have had, economic or adventure, or pure unadulterated patriotism, they offered their lives for us who stayed at home, and

we cheered them when they went away, and even if the riff-raff and scum were not always among the slain and some of them did come back (which, of course, they shouldn't), the good old Book says: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man give his life for his friends'."

"Good old Book," said the commercial with a touch of scorn. "Let me tell you something. After a hard week's work I was riding home in the street car (I wore my button then), when a clerical gentleman came and sat beside me. 'I see you are a returned man' he said. I acknowledged the soft impeachment. The gentleman of the cloth then put his hand in his pocket and pulling out a little Testament, very graciously presented me with it.

"I felt the color rise to my cheeks, and I said, 'Why do you give this to me? Do you think I am worse than anyone else? Why don't you give it to some of the other fellows who are not returned men? Don't you think they need it as much as I do?' I then gave him back his Testament, at which he seemed hurt. Too many people look upon a returned man as one who specially needs a Testament—a sort of returned riff-raff."

"Perhaps," said another mechanic, "he thought you'd been in the klink and needed a Testament. When I was in the army I was put in close confinement in the klink, and the only book they gave us to read was the Testament and they marched us to church between a guard with fixed bayonets to hear the gospel of the love of Christ. Is it any wonder I don't wear buttons or go to church?" and he disappeared under an auto to fix a connecting rod.

"Well, boys," said the drummer as he replaced his samples in his grip and buckled it up, "I'm trying to forget the war, but any more fighting I have to do will be for Canada in Canada."

"You're d—n right," came a chorus of voices from under the autos, and one called out, "Not in Vladivostok anyway, Mac."

"So long, boys. So long, Mac."

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## The Convict's Wife

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**D**URING my few weeks as superintendent of Calgary's relief department I have come in direct contact with all sorts and conditions of humanity, some helpless, and lacking initiative and desire to do anything for themselves; some crafty and grasping, like old Fagin in "Oliver Twist," and some were the innocent victims of circumstances and economic conditions, victims of—

“War that shatters their slain,  
Peace that grinds them as grain,  
Their eyes fixed ever in vain  
On the pitiless eye of fate.  
Their bells prolonged unto knells,  
Their hopes that a breath dispels,  
Their bitter forlorn farewells,  
And the empty echoes thereof.”

Of all the victims none has moved me so much as “the convict's wife.”

The throng was fairly large that afternoon. Numbered tickets had been given out and when the door was opened and Number 10 was called, I saw a plain but neatly dressed little woman with a bonnie little two-year-old boy by her side.

As I closed the door, I pointed to a chair opposite my desk and said, “Be seated, lady.” She sat down and took the little boy on her knee.

Seating myself opposite her I said, “What can I do for you, lady?” “I should like just a little milk and a few groceries,” she said. “Are you a resident of Calgary?” “Yes; four years.”

“How many children have you?” “Two besides this boy, ages four and six.” “Are you a widow?” “No,” she said, and her eyes looked me squarely in the face, almost defiantly, I thought, as she answered in monosyllables.

“Has your husband deserted you?” I queried. “No.” “Well, is he at home sick?” I continued. Still the defiant look and a monosyllable. “No.” “Well,” I asked, a little impatiently, “Where is he?”

A deep crimson flush crept up over the erstwhile pale face. The eyes which a moment before had looked me squarely in the face, dropped, she bent her head toward the little boy and I

heard, accompanied with either a sob or a sigh, the whispered words, "In jail." I felt the color mount to my own face and I became aware that instead of proceeding with the questions I was rudely staring at her and the boy. What a brute she must think me. What a wound I had ruthlessly torn open, setting every nerve vibrating in excruciating agony in the effort to say to the relief officer, a stranger, the words "In jail." Oh, the stigma of it. I was roused from my rude staring by the child looking into the mother's face and saying "Daddy."

This was a little bit too much. I had to get up out of my chair. I had to look out of the window at the passing people. I had to blow my nose. As I sat down again and faced her she seemed to think I had got up because I hesitated about the merits of her case.

So she continued: "You know, sir, I have to work in one of the stores where I get \$10 a week. I leave my children with a neighbor during the day. I have kept going so far but the cold weather coming on we are going to need coal and clothes. I couldn't keep things going and so I just had to come to get a little help—ever so little."

I felt quite sure then, she thought me some species of flint. "Doesn't the provincial government send you anything of your husband's earnings while he is in j— while he's away from home?" I hastily corrected. (Great Scott, I very nearly said jail.)

"No sir, not a cent."

"Do you mean to say that you and the bairns might starve for all the help you get from this Christian state?"

"I get nothing, sir, but I am trying very hard to keep things going."

"Yes, yes," I said somewhat hastily.

"Now, you want some milk, bread, groceries, etc.? How much milk do you want?" "Well, sir, we've been trying to get along with a pint a day."

"A what?" I almost shouted. "A pint a day, sir." (I believe she thought I considered her somewhat extravagant.)

I took another look at the little boy on her knee. He did look a little blue in the ears and under the eyes.

"Do you ever ride in the street cars?" I asked.

"Yes, sometimes, but I can't afford the tickets, so I walk."

"Yes, yes; I didn't mean that." (She still thinks me an ogre.)

"But didn't you ever read the ads round the top of the car?"

"Oh, yes, sir, I have read about the nice dresses for ladies and warm coats for children, but I haven't the money to buy them."

"Didn't you ever read, plastered over the space, 'The child is the greatest asset of the nation. Plenty of milk makes healthy children'? Now you have one pint between four of you—thank God there's no more of you. Just about two spoonfuls apiece and a smell at the bottle before you go to bed at night." "Oh, no, sir, not four but three of us. I don't take milk in my tea; I do without."

"Do you? Well, but you can't raise three strong healthy children on a pint of milk a day, even if you do drink your tea clear."

"Don't you know they'll need strong, healthy men to shoulder a rifle and bayonet in the next war?" With an almost terrified look she clutched her boy closer to her heart. (No doubt now what she thinks I am.)

"So you get along with a pint a day?" "Yes, sir." "I suppose you could drink a spoonful or two more if you had it?" I said nothing more but made the order out for two quarts. The same line was followed with other foods. "How about meat, lady?"

"Oh," she said, "we haven't had any for a long time." Heavens! farmers can hardly give their beef away and here are people who hardly know the taste of it. What's wrong?

I handed her the orders and as she rose to leave she read them, looked at them again to make sure she read aright, and then at me, and two big tears fell from her cheeks. "All right, lady, it's the City of Calgary, not me, not me; I'm only doing what I'm paid for," and out of the door went the little boy and the convict's wife.

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## Smelly People

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I HAD just arrived home after a somewhat strenuous week's work at the Relief Department, and was enjoying a fragrant cup of tea when the phone rang, and a woman's voice in rather wistful tones said: "I did not get my grocery order today and I have nine children."

"Who is speaking, lady?" I queried—"Oh, yes, the blind man's wife. Sorry, lady, I totally forgot it. Where do you deal? I'll come down right away and give it to you." So I swallowed my tea, put on my overcoat, and took the next car down town to give the blind man's wife her much-needed grocery order.

The blind man's boy had come early in the day among the throng that stood outside my office door awaiting relief. I had told the little man to go home and I would see that they got their order some time today. The blind man was one of our huge industrial army. He had worked on the railway, got struck with a big hammer on the head, left the railway, and some time after had gone totally blind as a result of the blow. He learned to make baskets, and now was trying to make baskets to earn his living, but found it hard to sell them.

In the military army when a man falls wounded the stretcher men carry him off the field, he is cared for until he recovers; he is not allowed to want. But in our industrial army that is fighting to maintain for us the struggle for existence, when a private falls there is little or no provision made, and he is left to care for himself as best he may. So the blind man's boy stood waiting among the throng.

A man poked his nose in at the door of the waiting room, squeezed his nose with his thumb and finger, quickly withdrew from the door, and remarked to me, "Your job is looking after the smelly people; I don't envy you."

He was quite right. They were smelly people, but still they were people, common people, despite their smelly quality; and after all I think I even prefer the pungent smell of the fermenting sweat of unwashed toil, malodorous as it may be, to the heavily perfumed odor of languid, lazy luxury. Yes, of the two extremes, leaving out the golden mean, I prefer my smelly people, even though I may be occasionally imposed on and sometimes—

"Quite forget their vices in their woe."

And so I arrived home close to 10 p.m., and as I pulled shut the storm door I looked out and hoped it would chunook, and wondered if any widow, deserted wife or some of my smelly people were without coal this keen, cold night.

I threw off my coat, tie, collar and boots, put on an old sweater (possibly smelly), and after the rest had retired, I pulled an old chair in front of the stove, and with the light out, except the flickers from the stove, I put my feet in the oven and ruminated over the events of the week and some of the characters I had met. The men with one accord wanting work, work, work.

One man of the smelly gang, a returned soldier, came in, and when I asked him what he needed in the line of relief, he got excited and said, "I don't want relief; I don't want charity. By — I won't have charity. By — I won't." I tried to calm him down and show him that I was not dispensing charity; that he could work his relief out.

"Then why can't you give me the work first? I don't want to buy groceries on a relief ticket, and by — I won't. I'll go home and shoot my kids, wife and myself, first, by — I will," and he almost ran out of the room in a state of great agitation. I afterwards got him to come to my house, and we had dinner together. He told me he had lost his head a bit, that what he wanted was work. He had been through the war; was at Mons, Ypres, etc. I asked him if he saw the angels at Mons. He said he didn't, but knew many who did. He closed by saying, "War, sir, is nothing but murder, murder, murder." He told us many incidents of the war. I think he is one of my friends now, even if he does belong to the smelly people. All he wants is work.

And so I sat on my old chair, and as I looked at it, it seemed somewhat familiar. When I want to be comfortable, I don't take a well regulated, well painted, well varnished, orthodox parlor chair; I take this old chair. Its paint and varnish are done. One leg has a white stripe of kalsomine down it (we use it to hold the kalsomine pot). The seat has marks of the saw on it. When I want something to saw a board on, I use the old chair. It is like Paul when he said, "I bear the marks." And then I can pull it up and tilt it backwards, and just use the two hind legs, and although it creakingly complains a bit it still continues to give service. Good old chair. With a varnished, orthodox parlor chair I can't put my feet on the rungs, or tilt it backwards on its hind legs. And somehow the old chair reminded me of my smelly people, and I took another look at it. Bless my soul, if this old kalsomined, saw-marked chair isn't one that came from the farm. Farmers, smelly of the stable, had sat in that chair. The smelly tramp, Tom Brown, who

thought he was Cardinal Newman and recited, "Lead, Kindly Light" before he went out into the gathering gloom, sat in that chair.

The farm, the smelly old farm, that smelled of horses and cows and sheep and pigs and new mown hay and flowers, where on a night like this I would get in from the smelly spruce bush after dark with my load of logs, tend my horses, milk the cows, and then with a good stick of tamarack in the box stove to warm us up and to dry socks and mittens, I would sit in this old chair, and nod and chat till bedtime, and go to bed, only to wake up and find it was morning, and wonder how quickly the night had sped.

The smelly farm, with its smelly cow stables and mangers; Yes, indeed! Wasn't the Prince of Peace born in just such a smelly old cow stable, and didn't He choose (of all people) some smelly fishermen to spread his Gospel to the poor, the unemployed, the down-and-outs, until the smell of sweat-covered, dust-begrimed toilers in the world's work is transformed into the odor of the acceptable sweet-smelling incense that forever ascends before the Great White Throne?

But I digress--I must come back to earth, to the farm.

How did I come to leave such "homely joys and destiny obscure" to get mixed up with the seething mass of workless, jobless, smelly people? I looked at the flickering shadows on the wall and said: "I'll exchange my equity in my farm and get a piece of land near the sea, in a warmer climate, where I can sleep at night, without nightmares of hungry, shivering children, whose father is in jail, and they are left by the **Christian state** to starve or shift as best they may." I'll be out of sight of this misery and hunger and discontent of humanity. Am I not entitled at my age to a quiet rest. But try as I would the word rest would not spell r-e-s-t, but would persist in the shadow to spell R-U-S-T, and some inward monitor in spite of my logical and specious arguments, would insist in putting alongside of REST the word JONAH, till I got out of patience and pushed the old creaking chair back petulantly and rolled into bed a little out of temper, only to dream that this fiend of a monitor had taken the form of a raven at the foot of my bed,

"And his eyes had all the seeming of a demon that is dreaming,

Not a feather then he fluttered and the only words he uttered

Were 'Rest, rust--Rest, rust'."



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## The Push-Cart Man

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ONE dark, windy night about 11 o'clock, when a slushy spring snowstorm was just commencing, I stood at the corner of Centre street and Eighth avenue waiting for a Tuxedo car.

Right across the pavement as far as the car tracks, was a large quantity of broken glass.

Autos were hurrying home and some noticed the glass and steered around, while some saw it too late and uttered imprecations under their breath, having visions of punctured tubes and blow-out tires.

As we were contemplating what damage might be done to car owners and others, there loomed up a spare figure, pushing a two-wheeled cart with a broom and shovel in it. The figure was that of an old man with a scant coat, shabby brown hat and blue overalls, ragged at the bottom. The wind blew the overalls around as though there was nothing in the overalls but a leg not much larger than the handle of the broom he worked with. But below the flapping overalls was a foot, not straight, but turned inwards, twisted like a clubfoot.

Cheerily he stopped his cart and taking his broom he limped to where the glass lay and swept it up and shovelled it into his cart.

"Doing your bit, old chap, for our city?" I called out.

"Yes, sir," he said, looking up at me with a smile.

"Guess you've saved a tire or two," I remarked.

"I hope so. A fellow like me can't do much but I'm doing what I can," he said.

He then put his brush and shovel into his cart and hobbled with his cart and his clubfoot to the next corner, to continue doing his bit for our city. He had done what he could. Familiar words those.

"Calgary is pretty well looked after. The commissioners have things pretty well organized. I'll bet that old push-cart chap saved \$100 by having that glass swept up so quickly," said a bystander.

"I believe he has," I said, "but I wonder what his wages are?"

"Fifty cents an hour," said another, "but you can get a bushel of those old chaps at any time; there's lots of 'em. The



commissioners intend cutting their wages to 45 cents an hour."

"Why so?" I asked.

"Oh," said my friend, "the mill rate must be lowered."

"Do they intend cutting their own and the salaries of the heads of departments?" I asked.

"Not much. Look what they save the city by their policy and management!"

"I thought the cut was on account of the decrease in the high cost of living," I said.

"So it is," said my friend.

"Does it cost the higher official more to live than a push-cart man?" I asked. "Someone told me that when the ship is short of rations the captain takes his reduction along with the rest of the crew."

Tuxedo car came up then and I sat thinking all the way home till my thoughts took form after this fashion:

Sweep, sweep, sweep,  
Through rain or shine or snow;  
Sweep, sweep, sweep,  
Tho' winds blow high or low;  
For I am one of the wrecks of life,  
That strew the shore of our business strife.  
My youth is fled, my substance spent,  
And though my form is old and bent,  
Yet I must toil, life's lamp to keep,  
And so your streets I still must sweep.  
Sweep, sweep, sweep.

Push, push, push  
My cart through lane and street;  
Push, push, push,  
Through rain or snow or sleet.  
Though low descends my evening sun,  
My menial task I cannot shun.  
To keep aflame life's flickering light,  
I still must sweep your streets tonight,  
And through the busy traffic's rush  
My garbage cart I still must push.  
Push, push, push.

Sweep, push, sweep,  
With feeble limbs I creep,  
Push, sweep, push,  
Through competition's crush.

Like hungry wolves men stand  
To snatch from out my hand  
My push-cart and my broom,  
'Ere I shall have made room,  
When the pendulum of Time  
Shall cease to beat its rhyme  
For me to push and sweep,  
Creep, sweep, crush, push.



*Creep, Sweep, Crush, Push.*

---

## Five Men in a Box Car

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**J.** K. JEROME wrote about three men in a boat; I am writing about five men in a box-car:

The night was bitterly cold, the coldest of this year. The northeast wind howled down from the Arctic regions with a 30 below zero sting, and the little particles of snow-ice were like needles puncturing the skin. Eighth avenue was deserted, but on Ninth avenue east there were five men with five up-turned coat-collars, five hunched up-shoulders and five pairs of hands thrust in five pairs of pockets, but not five cents in all the five pair of pockets. They were looking for a sheltered spot to spend the night.

Looming up in the icy air there appeared an empty box-car with its door wide open. "What a providential palace. Empty, unused, an inanimate piece of wood on wheels, with its door invitingly wide open. Friendly box-car!

So five mouths blew on five pair of benumbed hands, and five pairs of knees crawled into the car, followed by five pairs of pretty cold feet, and five men huddled together in one corner and put five chins on the said five pairs of knees.

"My, isn't this great," said No. 1. "I'll tell the world," said No. 2. "What's that over there?" said No. 3. "Piece of paper," said No. 4. "Got a match?" said No. 5. Five fingers fumbled in five vest pockets and five matches were discovered. The piece of paper, with a few chips, were put in the middle of the five men. A match was struck, but a sudden gust of wind blew it out. Another match was struck and five hats, off the five heads, were instantly placed around the flaming match No. 2 to shield it from possible disaster. The paper caught and burst into a bright flame and five pairs of cold hands were immediately stretched out to catch every glow of heat that bitter night.

Who doesn't remember the "Little Match Girl" on the cold street corner? Who doesn't recall the visions of turkey, goose, warm, bright fires and a cheerful Xmas tree as each match she struck flamed and died? And when all the matches burst into one beautiful, bright flame, the kind old grandmother came and took the little match girl where she would feel no more frost.

And who knows as each of the five in the box-car tried to catch the heat from the flames, what visions of wife or child

or home floated before those five pairs of eyes silently contemplating the quickly dying flame?

But see! Another light, not of matches, breaks in. It is the flash-light of the officers of the law. It is against the law to occupy an empty box-car and so the five are hurried to the police station and charged with vagrancy. Vacancy would perhaps be a better charge. Vacant pockets, vacant stomachs.

Someone at the unemployed meeting called out, "What about the five men in a box-car? Let's get 'em out of jail."

"No," said another, "they're warmer there than in a box-car and get fed besides."

"Hope they feed 'em better than they did me in 1914," said one.

"What did they feed you? Club sandwiches," was called back, and the crowd yelled when they saw the joke.

In the eighteenth century France had her, "Les Misérables," the outcasts hiding in the sewers of Paris, hunted by the Javerts.

In the twentieth century, two hundred years after, Calgary, in the land of opportunity and plenty, has her "Les Misérables," her outcasts, hiding in box-cars, hunted by her Javerts.

Must it always be thus? Is our life forever to be without profits, without possessions? Shall the strength of our generations be barren as death? Is it all a dream then, or if it be, might we not live in a nobler dream?

Where is the Victor Hugo that will awaken us to our community obligations toward our "outcasts," awaken us to seek the causes of poverty and unemployment, to realize a new interpretation this Xmas of the phrase, "Our brother's keeper," and a higher conception of "Peace on earth, goodwill to men"?

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## Music to the Non-Musical

---

**I**N an account of a recent concert there appears this sentence: "Classical numbers were interspersed in the hope seemingly of interesting an audience many of whom were non-musical(?). The reception given these, however, was more enthusiastic than the rest of the program." That is, the so-called non-musical people responded to the better class of music.

As the great majority of people, like myself, are non-musical(?), it might be interesting to know how we judge music.

In the accounts given by professionals of the performances of eminent musicians, we get such phrases and words as "sparkled with iridescent color" (I once read an article, "What color is G sharp?") "beautiful arpeggiated passages," etc. These phrases may convey exact ideas to connoisseurs or professionals, but to the non-musical (?) they are meaningless.

There was a humorous story of a non-musical farmer who went to hear Rubenstein play. He heard little birds singing; heard the thunder clouds roll up and saw the lightning; heard the tramp of soldiers marching, and at last the farmer jumped up, waved his hat and shouted, "Go it, Rube," to the disgust of the connoisseurs of music who cried, "Sit down," "Put him out!" But I doubt if Rubenstein could have had a greater compliment or if even the professionals appreciated the music to a greater degree.

I once revisited my native city of Manchester, England. One drizzling evening I was plodding down Piccadilly when I was accosted by an old schoolmate who was a musical connoisseur.

After inquiring how I was getting along in Canada, he asked me if I still kept in touch with music? I told him I still loved it but was not a musician.

"By jove, old top," he said, "you are just the man we want. Are you free tonight?" I said I was.

"Do you remember the old Free Trade hall with its big organ?" he asked.

"To be sure," I replied. "Where we used to hear De Jongs' concerts and the 'Messiah,' etc., when you and I were boys."

"Well, there is to be a musical contest there tonight between two organists and we are just lacking one judge. We

have twelve musicians, judges, and we require one layman, a sort of non-musical man-in-the-street, so that the lay element will be represented, and you will be entirely impartial, as you know neither of the contestants."

Although I protested I had to yield, and that evening I found myself introduced to the other twelve judges.

The hall was packed, and the first contestant was a short, wiry man with a stubby, stiff, red beard, and very big, powerful glasses. His selection was "The Storm." He had all sorts of electrical apparatus. We heard the thunder rumbling, the rain drops pattering and the storm approaching. It broke in its fury. The electrical lightnings flashed, the thunders of the deep pedal organ rolled through the hall; the rain fell in torrents—I almost put up my umbrella.

The organist's two hands and feet were here, there and everywhere. However did he manage it? Then the storm passed. The thunder gradually ceased, the sun came out and the Alpine villagers' hymn of praise mingled with songs of birds. Hardly had the last note sounded when the whole audience burst into one deafening acclaim and hats and handkerchiefs waved. The short organist, with the stubby red beard, bowed acknowledgments to the audience.

What technique! What realism! What clever manipulation of manuals and stops! What swift, accurate fingering and pedalling! Wonderful! Marvellous! The musician was so wonderful he eclipsed the music.

The second contestant was a lady. She was led by the hand to be introduced to the audience, and it was some little time before we realized that she was blind—totally blind. She was of medium height, had delicate fingers, beautiful brown, wavy hair, a winning smile, large dark brown though sightless eyes. Led to the organ, after feeling over the stops, she commenced a sweet reverie with the vibrating flute stop giving the melody. As the reverie proceeded there were introduced a few plaintive minor chords, and we became aware that we were listening to her life's history in music; the plaintive minors being the loss of sight.

The struggles, the hardships, the handicaps of life were all portrayed in the touching, pathetic reverie. There was no use of mechanical aids; no extraordinary musical gymnastics, but we all felt that the soul of the organist, with its feelings and troubles, were poured into the organ, and from the organ into our hearts, until we quite forgot the musician in the music. We forgot we were in the hall. It was as though Sullivan's "Lost Chord" had been found and had come from the soul of the organ into ours. We felt as if we ought to dig down into

our pockets and empty them to help the outcasts, "Les Miserables" of the world, and our heart-throbs could not be repressed. And when she had finished with a touching little minor cadenza, fading away into a whispering softness, our applause was not so deafening, because the most of us had seemingly been afflicted with a sort of sympathetic influenza and had to use our handkerchiefs, and also because any noisy, clamorous demonstration might destroy the feelings created, the irresistible desire to help somebody or do someone good.

The judges then retired, and as they discussed in puzzling musical phraseology the merits of the contestants, the wonderful technique, the marvellous skill of manipulation, the clever aids of electric contrivances and the intense realism, the fiery, red-bearded organist seemed to be winning the day and I felt as a judge for the non-musical I must give vent to my convictions, so I burst out with this: "Oh, gentlemen, doesn't the true test of music lie in how it affects the listener; what feelings and emotions it raises? In the first contestant, marvellous though his technique, wonderful though his manipulation of keyboards and pedals, was not our interest more diverted to the musician than to his music? Nay, didn't we almost forget about the music at times in the marvel of the agility of the acrobat's musical gymnastics?"

"In the second case, did we not forget the musician in her music? Were we not oblivious to the performer in the message of her sympathy and love for others that her reverie aroused in our hearts, and surely, this must be the true spirit and function of music?"

I felt afraid at my boldness in daring to offer my opinion, but I just couldn't help it.

The verdict was eight to five in favor of the blind organist, who was led to the front and acknowledged the sincere but subdued plaudits of the lovers of real music.

Then I awoke and there was a tear on my cheek, but I have always cherished the message of the blind organist.



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# The Old School Teacher

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SOME time in November, 1922, there came a call to the Relief department that an old man was very ill, if not dying, in the King Edward Hotel. An investigator was sent at once and the medical health officer immediately visited the man and reported that he needed food more than anything else.

Food was provided and a short time afterwards the old man was able to present himself at the counter of the Relief Officer and give his story.

In appearance he was an old man, somewhere between seventy or seventy-five, was shabbily dressed, was blind in one eye, the other one a light blue and he was somewhat deaf. He had no relatives and no friends able to assist.

"His flower was in the yellow leaf,  
To him was left the canker and the grief."

Originally he had been a school teacher in Ontario in the backwoods, where it was the custom to "board around" and for wages the munificent sum of \$15 or \$20 a month.

Then the opening of model schools for third-class teachers and the normal schools for second-class had gradually squeezed out these old boarding-out teachers, who, whatever their faults, had given of their best to educate the youth of the backwoods. I say these old teachers were squeezed out by the fresh blood from the normal schools. What board wanted an old teacher when new blood could be had in the crush of competition?

So this man had been squeezed out and as there appeared no niche he could fill—what commercial corporation wanted an old teacher, anyway?—he became one of the flotsam and jetsam of society, doing odd jobs for whatever farmer he could find, earning his way in summer and trusting to luck for the winter. So, although he was born in Ontario he wasn't a taxpayer here, not even a resident; no family—only Canadian citizen.

"His prime of life in wandering spent and care,  
His fortune led to traverse realms alone  
And find no spot of all the world his own."

And so he asked to be taken care of during the winter of 1922-23, and in the summer he was going with some farmer

to again earn his board. He was an intelligent man. He spent most of his time at the public library, and at the restaurant for his frugal meals. The doles, where we could not give work, were not such as to get fat on. Economy was the watchword. Some day old men will be of as much value as many sparrows. Some day old age pensions will be given. Some day men, and not money, will be paramount.

The old man was irritable in temper, and as the spring approached I reminded him of his custom to work for some farmer for his board, and he said he would soon be away for the summer. April went and May came, and still he seemed to make no effort to get work. Perhaps old age creeping, creeping on made his blood sluggish. I at last asked him what farmer he was going with and when. He answered in a week. I then pressed the question. "What then?" "Oh, back to the city I suppose for the winter." "What then?" "Back to the country for another summer." "What then?" The continued "What then?" brought us to the inevitable point where he would be unable to work in the summer and to the inevitable end. Perhaps I stressed the "What then?" too much, for about the middle of June he got angry as I once more asked him, and he went out of the door in a temper.

Next morning "The Albertan" had the notice: "Old man, about 70, thin gray locks, one eye, found dead on the C.P.R. track west of Calgary, struck by an approaching train."

To the old teacher, the "What then?" had come with sudden and terrific swiftness. I was appalled—felt almost guilty.

The old teacher had been squeezed out of teaching, had at last been squeezed out of farm laboring, and finally had the life squeezed out of him by a huge locomotive. One would think that the squeezing process was now complete, that no more squeezing were possible, but no, there was yet one more squeeze, or shall I say two more squeezings yet, though as far as the gray-locked old school teacher was concerned it didn't matter much. He was squeezed into a cheap pauper coffin and squeezed out of the orthodox burying ground. He was not thought worthy to be buried among those who had money to buy plots and monuments which told what good people they were—that no one suspected,—when alive, no he was squeezed out of this ground and squeezed into the Potter's Field where they buried the traitor Judas. There was no marble monument to tell the good things he had done when alive. Perhaps he hadn't done any.

I knew of a dog that died and the children had a funeral over him and they found an old barrel stave and wrote with a

piece of charcoal "T-I-G-E," and put it at the head of the old dog's grave.

This old teacher did not even have a barrel stave that was given a dog. Not even a cheap piece of scantling 2 x 4—

"His bones from insult to protect,  
No frail memorial still erected high  
To implore the passing tribute of a sigh."

Nothing except that the kindly prairie grass came creeping, creeping up over the mouldering heap to beautify and make green what society forgot to do.

And as this is the anniversary of his death, I picked a few prairie flowers and wended my way to the cemetery to be mindful of the unhonored dead, to see if I could find the spot where he lay (no headstones here), and place these few wild flowers on the grave of the old school teacher.

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## The Veteran's Story

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WE were having a Father-and-Son night. More such nights would do good. A father-and-son night at home wouldn't be a bad idea. At any rate those dads who hadn't any sons were supposed to hunt up some son who had no dad, and bring him along. So we had dads for sons and sons for dads, and one who came near not having any dad at all.

We had songs and other music by both dads and lads. We had travelogs given by the C.P.R. moving picture man. He took us on a C.P.R. liner across the briny Atlantic from Quebec to Liverpool. Then he took us from Calgary to Vancouver through all the magnificent scenery to be seen on the C.P.R. while crossing those wonderful mountains. "Pretty good advertising for the C.P.R.," you say. Yes, friend, but also very, very interesting and instructive to dads as well as lads. We were all sorry when the end came. Then we had sleight-of-hand tricks and ventriloquism.

Then we went down to the banquet hall, where for half an hour more or less, dads and lads ate together, drank together, paternized together, fraternized together, and filialized (how's that?) together—that is, in short, we were all chums, just chums together, pals as the old song had it—

"Dear old pals, jolly old pals,  
Clinging together in all sorts of weather;  
Dear old pals, jolly old pals,  
Give me the friendship of dear old pals."

Pals together for an hour, just as dads and lads should be all the time.

Well, after the dads had finished passing and persuading and pressing the lads to take another piece of cake or pie, and the lads had emphatically protested that although to oblige dear old pal dad they might probably be able to chew another piece of pie, they possibly couldn't swallow it, well, I say, after the dads had given it up, then the toastmaster rapped on his cup with his knife and we all stood and drank the toast to the King, and all went merry as a marriage bell.

The toastmaster was just about to call upon a dad to propose a toast to the lads when from the lower part of the hall a dad, a veteran of the Great War, arose, and called out, "Mr.

Toastmaster, I'm not on the program, but——." Here we all turned to look where the voice came from and whose it was, and standing up with a dear little nine-year-old laddie standing on a chair beside him, with his arm tight around daddy, we saw one of our daddies, a veteran of the Great War.

"I'm not on the program, but I've something on my mind this father-and-son night, that I must tell. I just can't keep it in."

Here our feet stopped shuffling, spoons stopped clinking against cups, the toastmaster with the toast list still in his hand sat down. Silence, attentive silence, fell on us all, dads and lads, as we craned our necks forward to hear the story that had impelled and compelled the veteran to speak, though not on the program.

He continued: "Well, boys, just about nine years ago, along with a lot of other boys, I was in France on the Somme. We had been out of the trenches some little time. The weather was damp and dark. The order came that we had to relieve the boys in the trenches that night. We were getting ready when Dick came up to me and said, 'Jack, the boys are going in tonight.' I said, 'Yes,' After a bit Dick said, 'But I don't think you're going, Jack.' 'Me not going,' said I. 'What the blankety blank are you giving me? I guess if the boys are going in, I'm going, too.' 'No, Jack,' says Dick, 'you're a married man and I'm going in your place.' I was getting a bit warm, and I said, 'Do you think I'm a piker, that I'm a coward? I'm going.' Just then the Sergeant came up and said, 'Jack, you're not to go in tonight, Dick's going in your place.' 'Well,' I said, 'that's a nice how-do-you-do. Who said so?' 'Them's the orders,' said the sergeant. 'Where's the captain, I'll see about this?' I went up to where the captain was and asked him. He said, 'Yes, Jack, you're to stay back.' 'But captain,' I said, 'I came over to do my bit along with the rest, I'm not a piker.' But the captain said, 'There's work back here to be done and you can do your bit back here just as well, and Dick wants to go in your place.' Well, I saw 'em march out to the trenches and that night they had to go over the top." Here the Vet's voice grew a bit shaky, "And, boys, Dick—never—came—back," and a big round tear slowly trickled down the Vet's cheek and dropped on the little lad's head.

"Not long after, I got a Blighty, boys, and when I landed in London, the first person to meet me was my wife with this little boy, a babe, in her arms, and we called him Dick in memory of the pal who went in the trenches for me. If it hadn't been for Dick this little chap wouldn't have had a daddy here, this father-and-son night. And let me say, boys, that this

wasn't the only case. There were many others, but they didn't get in the papers, and I felt that I just had to get up and tell my story, although I wasn't on the program, and I hope you'll pardon me interrupting." And the veteran sat down as quickly as he got up.

The toastmaster tried to tell Jack that we were all glad he had got up and told us his story, but he seemed to have got a piece of cake stuck in his throat and couldn't say anything for a while, and before the thunderous applause broke out a good many had a touch of a cold and had to blow their noses violently, and other like myself who wore glasses, had to rub them with our handkerchiefs. The glasses somehow got steamed up, and if you had watched closely you might have seen that for every rub the glass got our eyes got two.

Canada has many problems and troubles, poverty, taxation, unemployment, capital and labor, but I venture to say that they would be much easier of solution if we all possessed the spirit of the Veteran's Story.



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## Old Time Barn Dance

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ON Friday night the W. W. Grant company were broadcasting and some of us were listening in on our crystal set. All at once I heard, "Oh, daddy, do come and listen to the old time dance tunes we used to have years ago on the farm. Now they've just finished the Arkansas Traveller and now they're playing 'Over the Ocean Wave.' Don't you remember, to that Ocean Wave tune they used the call:

"First two gents cross over and by the lady stand,  
Next two gents cross over and take her by the hand,  
Swing the corner lady and balance to partners all,  
Swing your own sweet honey and promenade the hall."

"I can see the evening we went to Walter's wedding just before haying. What a move we got on. How we got the cows up early, milked, the separating done, calves fed, pigs fed and hens shut up, and got into our best Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, the double wagon-box full of hay, and you and mother rode in front on the spring seat, and we youngsters all piled into the hay, and drove ten miles and danced all that June night, till broad daylight and went home with the girls in the morning, and got back home in time to milk the cows."

"Yes," I said, "I remember and I also remember how old Blackie used to follow you around to milk her first, and she would lick your calico dress or try to chew your sunbonnet strings."

"Oh, daddy dear, let's go back again to the farm and milk cows, and walk by the babbling spring creek in the coulee under the spruces, where the boys shot partridges! Let's go back and get away from this cry for work, from men with frozen fingers, frozen hands and frozen feet because they didn't have money to get proper clothing to work with, get away from the cry of women and children for food and fuel. We never had anything like this in old time barn-dance days. Nobody was rich, but nobody went hungry and we always had lots of wood even if we didn't always quite know just where we cut it."

"Yes, dear," I said, "I'll go back if you'll put back the old setting of twenty years ago. Good old John Deans, whose face burst into smiles like a sunburst of diamonds when we scraped out those very dance tunes you now hear on our old fiddles, is now

in the cemetery, and will you bring back all the boys and girls who danced with us on that summer night?"

"Oh, dear, not all, daddy. Many, very many, of them are 'In Flanders' fields where poppies grow,' " and I looked up and saw two big round tears running down her cheeks. "Would the old farm without its old setting be worth while even if we could get away from the troubles of the world," I said. Remember Wordsworth:

'Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown,  
It must or we shall rue it,  
We have a vision of our own,  
And why should we undo it?  
The treasured dreams of times long past,  
We'll keep them winsome, Marrow,  
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,  
'Twill be another Yarrow.'

"Besides being 'another Yarrow', did not those boys in Flanders' fields who danced the barn dances with us that summer night, say:

'To you with falling hands we throw the torch,  
Be yours to hold it high?'

"And even if we could forget the world's troubles and peacefully exist spending our spare time in quiet coulees, hunting partridge and wondering how, when and what made the steep cliffs, and in examining bits of stone and picking up flint arrowheads made by the neolithic red man long ago, should we be doing 'our bit' in holding up the torch by running away from the world's trouble? No! No! In the early days we faced brush, roots, rain, mud, sod-roofed shacks and hard work. We can go forward, but there's no going back. Shall we not face the difficulties and troubles of unemployment, poverty and wretchedness in our endeavor to do 'our bit' in bringing nearer the better day, with the same determination and plugging we did when we faced the brush homestead and leaky sod roofs? Shall we fail to hold up the torch? No. Listen, they're playing the 'Soldiers' Joy' for the last set, the breakdown, and CFCN is signing off and the old friends and scenes of long ago become 'Pictures that Hang on Memory's Wall.' They are a stimulus for future action, not a dead idol to worship, these recollections stirred by the 'old-time, barn dances'."



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*Printed by*  
*Albertan Job Press Limited*  
*310 Eighth Avenue East*  
*Calgary, Alberta*

